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gracious manner, they ordered him to seat <sup>7.</sup>  
~~himself~~ in their presence; a rare  
honour in this proud and punctilious Court.\*

At the request of their Majesties, Columbus now  
gave an account of the most striking events  
of his voyage, and a description of the islands  
which he had discovered. He displayed the  
specimens he had brought of <sup>unknown</sup> birds and  
other animals; of ~~them~~ rare plants of medicinal  
and aromatic virtue; of native gold ~~in~~  
in dust; in crude masses, ~~found~~ or laboured  
into barbaric ornaments; and above all, the  
natives of these countries, who were objects of  
intense and inexhaustible interest: since ~~there~~  
there is nothing to man so curious as the  
varieties of his ~~own~~ <sup>own species</sup> fellowman.  
All these he pronounced mere harbingers  
of greater discoveries which he had yet to  
make; which would add realms of incalcu-  
lable wealth to the dominions of their ma-  
jesties, and whole nations of profligates to  
the true faith.

The words of Columbus were listened to with  
profound <sup>emotion</sup> attention by the sovereigns. When  
he had finished, they sunk on their knees,  
and, raising their clasped hands to heaven,  
their eyes filled with tears of joy and gratitude.

\* Las Casas. Hist Ind. L. I. C. 78  
Hist Almerante. Cap. 41.

## MAY MEETING, 1883.

The stated meeting was held on Thursday, the 10th instant, at 3 o'clock P.M.; the President, the Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, in the chair.

The Recording Secretary read the record of the previous meeting, which was accepted.

The Librarian reported the list of donors to the Library during the last month.

The Corresponding Secretary communicated a letter from Signor Cornelio Desimoni, Vice-President of the Historical Society at Genoa, Italy, accepting his election as Corresponding Member.

The PRESIDENT then said: —

During my recent visit to Washington, my friend and relative, Mr. Sanders Irving, with whom I was staying, happened to mention that he had a considerable part of the original autograph manuscript of the "Life of Columbus," by his uncle, Washington Irving. Had I found, on examining the pages, that the collection was complete, I should have urged its being bound up and preserved as a precious memorial of the illustrious author. One of these days, when his relatives were willing to part with it, it would have found a fit place among the choicest treasures of some one of our great public libraries. But as so many pages were already missing, I gladly accepted one of them as a gift to our Autograph Cabinet. It contains a passage from the sixth chapter, book fifth, of the "Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus," in which his reception by the Spanish Court at Barcelona, after his first landing in the New World, is brilliantly described. As the preface to this work is dated at Madrid in 1827, this autograph page must have been written at least fifty-six years ago. It displays the extreme care and neatness with which Washington Irving prepared his manuscript for the press, showing but few interlineations or erasures. It might well be heliotyped for the next volume of our Proceedings. Irving was born on the 3d of April, 1783, and the centennial anniversary of his birthday was duly commemorated at Tarrytown last month. As the illustrious biographer of Columbus and of Washington, his name must always have a proud place in American literature.

While I am on the subject of autographs, I may take the opportunity of presenting an interesting original letter of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, — William Ellery, of Rhode Island. He was born in Newport, Dec. 22, 1727; was graduated at Harvard University in 1747; was a member of Congress from 1776 to 1786; and died on the 15th of February, 1820, at ninety-three years of age. This letter bears date February, 1806, when he was seventy-nine. It is addressed to a young son, who had doubtless been christened after a then recent colonial governor of Rhode Island, from whom he was descended. It is strikingly characteristic of the man and of the times, and may well find a place in our Proceedings. A "Life of William Ellery" is found in the sixth volume of Sparks's "American Biography," written by his relative, Edward Tyrrel Channing, the brother of the great preacher who bore the name of William Ellery. Some of us have pleasant remembrances of the biographer, as our Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, and the corrector and criticiser of our themes at Harvard. We should hardly dare to criticise anything of his. Yet I cannot but observe that his biography gives little or no account of the family of William Ellery, and leaves us wholly in the dark as to the young son to whom this entertaining letter was addressed.\*

Let me add that the letter was given to me by my valued friend and classmate, Dr. Henry I. Bowditch, in whose name I venture to present it to the Society. As an autograph letter of one of the signers of the Declaration, it has a special interest and value.

I will detain you, Gentlemen, but a few moments longer before calling for communications from others. I have received a letter from our Corresponding Member, Professor Henry M. Baird, of New York, the historian of the Huguenots, on the subject of a monument to the famous Gaspard de Coligny, the most illustrious victim of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, in 1572. Coligny made one or two unsuccessful efforts, I believe, to colonize the coast of South Carolina, and the banks of St. John's River in Florida, with fugitive Protestants, and might thus have a local claim to be remembered on this side of the ocean. But it is as the hero and martyr of a world-wide cause that he is now to be commem-

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\* George Wanton Ellery, the youngest son of the signer, born at Newport, 24 December, 1789, and died there 26 January, 1867, aged seventy-seven. He was a faithful officer in the Newport Custom-House for fifty years, and was held in high esteem for his sound judgment and strict integrity.

orated, more than three centuries after his assassination. It is certainly a most striking illustration of the growing respect for the rights of conscience in France, that Roman Catholics and Protestants are alike included in the list of eminent men by whom this monument has been projected, and that the French government has not only granted an admirable site for the statue, between the Oratoire du Louvre and the Arcades of the Rue de Rivoli, but has offered to contribute one third of the cost after the other two thirds have been raised by private subscription. Twenty thousand dollars will be the cost of the whole work, of which more than five thousand have been secured. Professor Baird would gladly be the medium of any American contributions to the monument, which the descendants of Huguenots or others may be disposed to make.

*Autograph Letter of William Ellery, of Rhode Island, one of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence.*

DEAR WANTON

NEWPORT Febr<sup>y</sup> — 1806.

I have received a letter from M<sup>r</sup>. Updike dated February 24<sup>th</sup> inclosing your letter, I presume written about the same time; for it bore no date.

In it you write thus "there was a man came from Sea to Wickford with the small pox" this is not properly expressed. It would have been shorter and better to have written, about two or three weeks ago *a man came from sea* to Wickford with the small pox. I am glad that you have had the Kine-Pox which has been proved to be a security against the Small Pox. The people in Wickford, and every where else would do well to be inoculated for the Kine-Pox; which I believe has in no instance proved mortal. I hope the Bank will succeed and that Wickford may flourish. Could not Capt. Barney procure a cargo or freight at Wickford?

You have gone through Murray's Grammar twice, and are now perusing it a third time. How do you proceed in Arithmetic? Are you not almost master of it? When you have obtained a sufficient knowledge of it, I wish you to enter upon Geography and the Mathematics. Attend to your hand writing. It is too stiff, and looks as if you wrote with contracted fingers. I believe you do not hold your pen properly. If you do not you will never write easily and swiftly. Observe how those who write handsomly hold their pens, and imitate them. I am glad to find that there is only one word spelt wrong in your letter, and that is the omission of *h* in the word *through*. When you write but on one page fold your letter as I have done this; but if you prefer your present mode, take care to make the margin broad enough to receive the wafer without touching the writing.

Last Monday night Gen<sup>l</sup>. Washington's birth day was celebrated here by an elegant and brilliant ball. The Saturday preceding was

his birthday; but the ball was put off 'till Monday; that they might not encroach upon the Sabbath.

I intend that you shall learn to dance; for I wish you may move easily and handsomly, as well as write so; and as Pope says, they move easiest who have learn'd to dance.

Gracefulness in all our actions is becoming and commendatory. Affectation is worse than clumsiness. I have lamented that I never learned enough of dancing, and bowing, to know how to enter, and leave a room gracefully; not because I was from ignorance of dancing unqualified to take the floor in a ball room.

M<sup>r</sup>. Addison in his character of Marcia, in his Cato's Tragedy mentions as an ornament, that "Grace was in all her steps." You have acted, I believe, a part in that Tragedy and will recollect that part of the description of her I have noticed.

You my, dear Son, will have soon to act a part on the theatre of the world, and I hope you will act it well; for there the honour lies. To do this it is essentially necessary that you should be honest, diligent, and virtuous, and pious. I say pious, because piety requires, and secures both virtue and diligence. God grant that you may be possessed of a good heart, and of all useful knowledge. We are all as well as usual. My humour has not left me; but I hope it will when the weather grows warm.

My regards to M<sup>r</sup>. Barney, and to all who live in her house.

I am affectionately

Y<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup>. ELLERY.

The folding I proposed for a letter written on one page will not answer for one written on two, therefore I shall fold this as usual.

The Recording Secretary and Mr. C. H. Hill and Dr. A. McKenzie were appointed a committee to publish the Proceedings.

General Francis A. Walker, of Boston, and Professor Arthur L. Perry, of Williams College, were unanimously elected Resident Members of the Society.

The Rev. Dr. DEXTER then made the following remarks:—

I am not able to agree with our respected associate, Mr. Adams, in his contention that this Society ought to give to the public in modern form the ancient manuscripts which it prints;\* and, as time failed last month for full discussion, I ask leave to-day to read what, if possible, I would then have said on that subject.

This Society sets before itself as the constituency for whose benefit it especially labors, in the first place, intelligent and

cultivated people; and, in the second place, pre-eminently, such intelligent and cultivated people as are interested in historical literature, and addicted to historical studies. We do not publish primarily for circulating libraries; nor, indeed, so much for *any* who read, as for those who write history.

It being granted that we have in possession letters, journals, and miscellaneous manuscripts adapted to throw light upon historical questions, it seems to be obvious that the first choice of most students of such matters would be, if possible, to have access to those manuscripts themselves. But this must involve much trouble for them, and could not be without a risk unwise for us. Publication in some form, therefore, becomes expedient. The highest ideal of such publication would be through photo-lithography of the manuscripts, or some equivalent process of *fac-simile*, which should present them to the public desiring them in such shape as to be, to all intents and purposes, indistinguishable from the originals. But this involves an expenditure seldom justifiable, where possible. The next best thing, I maintain, is the rendition of such manuscripts through type, as nearly as may be in their exact form. This requires, of course, work more costly than ordinary, because the printed pages must accurately represent the written ones in all details of contraction, misspelling, false punctuation, and the like. Yet it is in this manner entirely possible to place in the hands of investigators the materials of history in a form as serviceably accurate as the original, and more useful, because more easily read. Thus, to refer to a publication on which Mr. Adams remarked, the student who has before him our much-honored associate, Dr. Green's, reproduction in type of the "Early Records of Groton, Massachusetts," is at least as well off for accuracy as, and much better off for comfort than, if the original "Indian Roll" were itself open on his table. This, because Dr. Green's editing employed its skill in exactly reproducing, and not in translating or embellishing the record.

There can, of course, be no objection that he who edits such a manuscript so published, should accompany it with every critical and explanatory suggestion which his general skill in such matters, and his special familiarity with the document in hand, may prompt. Indeed, it is much to be desired that he should do so; provided always he be careful to illustrate, and never to supersede, his original. In that case the student who looks to such a work for light is to a degree as well off as if the original were before him with the accomplished editor looking over his shoulder to interpret its

doubtful passages and illustrate its obscure references. No doubt the experience of every person who has had much occasion to examine ancient and obscure records has led him to be always grateful for all good editing, yet to esteem that editing always best which leaves in his possession the material for personal judgment as to all the doubtful matters of the case.

Nothing, for example, is more common in ancient manuscripts than a hiatus—sometimes *valde deflendus*—at the end of a line where the ink is faded, or at the top or bottom corner of a page where the paper is torn or worn, and the only clew to the missing part of the sense lies in the connection; a clew almost sure to take a different aspect with different minds. Or part of a word is obscured by an opaque ink-blot, or has been eaten out by a worm, or burned out by a spark from a pipe; leaving the sense of the passage to determine whether the writer intended, for example,—cala [bash], or cala [boose], or cala [mar], or cala [mine], or cala [mint], or cala [mist], or cala [mite], or cala [mus], or cala [mity]. I would rather take my chances with the word reproduced as it stands, than to have anybody's conjectural reading, without that opportunity. And I judge others by myself.

To the case of proper names these remarks particularly apply, because the clew there becomes often faint and dubious; while one proper name may be as good as another for the stop-gap,—if not a great deal better. I need only refer to an illustration within the cognizance of many of the experts of our own number, where long, if not high, debate took place over the question of the correct reading of the signature of a certain letter. Colonel Chester would have edited it as beyond all question *Slayney*. Mr. King, of the Essex Archæological Society, pronounced it *Swayney*, with possibilities for *Slayney*. The best expert in the British Museum made it *Slayney*. Our honored President at first thought it to be *Stanley* or *Stainly*; but subsequently, in view of the indorsement of his renowned ancestor on the letter, judged it more likely to be *Ashley*. And the autographic puzzle was solved at last by Mr. Appleton, who, through the evidence of the crest on the seal, settled it to be *Ashley*. Now I maintain that, in a matter of any particular importance, the printing of such a document should be accompanied by the *fac-simile* of a word so dubious, as offering the only feasible method of performing our duty of honest reproduction toward those treasures of the past of which we may be custodians.

It may, indeed, be pleaded that these are exceptional cases, and that, were exact reprint granted to be a duty in such instances, the wisdom of perpetually reproducing mere mechanical contractions, such as *y<sup>e</sup>* for “that,” *y<sup>e</sup>* for “the,” *y<sup>n</sup>* for “then,” *y<sup>m</sup>* for “them,” *w<sup>th</sup>* for “with,” and the like, — which disfigure the printed page and stumble the common reader, without in any degree modifying the sense, — would not be thereby established. To this I think there are, fairly, two answers. In the first place, it is of great consequence for any editor who has a reputation to gain, and of greater consequence to a Society like this which has a reputation to maintain, and the best historical interests of the community to promote, to have *one fixed rule* for work, and to have that rule the best. If that rule be one of absolute, all-inclusive, scrupulous, never-varying, and never-wearying accuracy of reproduction — nearest approach possible to *fac-simile* — the world knows what to expect, and will govern itself accordingly. But the moment that rule is relaxed, and made tolerant of exceptions, confidence is at an end, because in no case can it be exactly known how far such exceptions have been carried. Editors do not live forever. And tastes drift. To-day we shall have all such contractions spelled out fully, according to the usage — so far as there was any usage — of their time; to-morrow we shall have them emaciated if not emasculated, after the manner of Dr. Webster; and the next day we shall have them expurgated according to the perfumed propriety which may then prevail, or *fonografted* into barbarism itself. And nobody ever knows which is which.

In the second place, all contractions, misspellings, coarsenesses, and what not, are a part of the verisimilitude of the writer and his surroundings and his times. They every one help us sharply to see him as he was, and his conditions as they were; instead of dimly discerning all through the haze of modern improvements, as they were not. It aids us to comprehend the hard times which our fathers joyfully endured, when we see their words so jammed together as to extrude every possible letter, in order, when paper was worth its weight in coin, and scarce at that, to compress into a square inch the substance of a page. I have a manuscript sermon of Dr. Bellamy — and I make no doubt that when he preached it, it held out to the entire content of his congregation — which is written on two leaves, both of which might lie together on the palm of my hand and hardly jut over on either side. It is worth something to him who wants to understand the “true inwardness” of New England history

to be able to know, by Dr. Green's help, that a man who was enough of a man to be town-clerk — and, after the minister, possibly chief scholar — of a thriving Massachusetts town, as late as 1700, spelt "hog" and "legally" with an *e*, and "rest" with an *a*; the more when put with the fact that the Hon. Samuel Sewall of this town, graduate of Harvard, jurist, and author, was spelling in that same year "entombed" without a *b*, "weather" without an *a*, "private" without an *e*, and "porridge" without a *d*. I fail to see why, on grounds of truth or taste, it is more to be justified that the letters and papers of George Washington be edited into a style more polished than he actually wrote, than that Stuart or Trumbull should have painted the paterpaternal eyes or nose other than they were, to please some supposed demand of later times.

But it is said, further, that our fathers did not *print* in this way; that when their manuscript went into type the contractions expanded into full-fledged words, and that therefore we should print their manuscripts as they were in the habit of doing.

I think this averment as to their habit is something stronger than the facts will warrant. Taking down from my shelves without other selection than that of date, at intervals of a decade, five volumes of nearly the same size, for the half-century from 1570 to 1610 inclusive, I find on opening them — and I open them also at random — that I count in 1570 eighty-eight contractions on a single page; in 1580, four; in 1590, twenty-one; in 1600, twenty-three; and in 1610, sixteen.

But whatever our fathers may have done when they prepared their matter for the press, or printed it, clearly the vast majority of their manuscripts which have come to our hands, and which we put into type, was never intended by its authors for such use. It consists of individual and family letters, personal journals, and private records of many sorts, which those who wrote them never for one moment imagined would reappear in the glory of type to satisfy the thirst for knowledge of future generations. Why, then, are we not bound to deal so justly by them as to let the world see them in their literary undress? Who would not rather meet Sir Philip Sidney, Shakspere, John Milton, or Vandyck in doublet, jerkin, and trunk hose, than dowdyfied into a "dude"; or even disennobled in the most costly and courtly trousers, swallow-tails, and stove-pipe hats of our time?

I only add, in closing, that the same principles, as it seems

to me, apply with like force to the reprint of an ancient book. Grant that it be crammed with errors of the press, and that its punctuation sometimes runs wild, I contend that the function of reprinting is not that of revamping. Books so scarce that only two or three, or eight, or ten copies are known, are practically as inaccessible as manuscripts, and often need to be reproduced for the general good. But that reproduction should aim, as its highest function, to put *the old book just as it is*, and not a new book founded on the old, into the hands of the student. And if there be portions which are obscured by obvious errors of the press to that degree that more than one interpretation becomes possible; what is wanted is not that the editor should oracularly settle which is the true sense to the exclusion of all others, but that he aid his readers toward a wise choice between such senses as may in reason be admissible.

And, as to the modernizing of antique spelling and ancient style in reprinting an historical classic, I submit that whoever compares, page by page and line by line, even so well done a work as Dr. Young's "Chronicles of the Pilgrims" with its originals, will find in slight omissions and errors, and now and then perhaps a mistake involving possible misrepresentation of the exact intent of the writers, frequent occasion to wish that Dr. Young had been content to give us Bradford and Winslow minutely and exactly as they were, and not as he thought they ought to be.

Dr. GREEN, who was Mayor of Boston last year, presented copies of the inscriptions on the bronze tablets recently placed on the gates of the older burial-grounds in the city. He said that the first public suggestion of such memorials came from Alderman Stebbins, who introduced the order passed at a meeting of the Board of Aldermen, on Nov. 3, 1879; but it appears from the Proceedings (xvii. 132) that at least two months before this, Mr. Winthrop had suggested placing an inscribed tablet on the King's Chapel burial-ground. This order authorized the Mayor to place suitable tablets at the entrance of certain burial-grounds, giving the names of said grounds, the dates of their establishment as well as the names of some of the most prominent persons buried therein; but for some reason it was never carried out. Last year, on January 23, Alderman Stebbins introduced a similar order, and in compliance with it Dr. Green prepared the following inscriptions for the tablets, which have now been set up:—

**KING'S CHAPEL BURIAL GROUND****1630**

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Here were buried

**GOVERNORS OF MASSACHUSETTS**

John Winthrop 1649, John Endecott 1665,  
John Leverett 1679, William Shirley 1771 ;

**LIEUT. GOVERNORS OF MASSACHUSETTS**

William Phillips 1827, Thomas Lindall Winthrop 1841 ;

**GOVERNORS OF CONNECTICUT**

John Winthrop 1676, Fitz-John Winthrop 1707 ;

**JUDGES OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Wait Still Winthrop 1717, Adam Winthrop 1743,  
Oliver Wendell 1818, Thomas Dawes 1825 ;

**MINISTERS OF BOSTON**

John Cotton 1652, John Davenport 1670,  
John Oxenbridge 1674, Thomas Bridge 1715.

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**KING'S CHAPEL BURIAL GROUND****1630**

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Here were buried

Jacob Sheafe 1658, John Winslow 1674,

Mary Chilton 1679,  
a passenger in the Mayflower  
and wife of John Winslow,  
Major Thomas Savage 1682,

Lady Andros 1688,

Captain Roger Clap 1690, Thomas Brattle 1713,

Professor John Winthrop 1776,

James Lloyd 1831, Charles Bulfinch 1844.

**COPP'S HILL BURIAL GROUND****1659**


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Here were buried

**MINISTERS**

Increase Mather 1723,  
Samuel Mather 1785,

Cotton Mather 1728,  
Andrew Eliot 1778 ;

and

Thomas Lake,                      David Copp,                      Nicholas Upshall,  
John Phillips,                      Anthony Haywood,                      John Clarke,

and others of the early inhabitants

of Boston.

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On this ground were planted  
the British Batteries  
which destroyed the Village of Charlestown  
during the Battle of Bunker Hill,  
June 17, 1775.

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**GRANARY BURIAL GROUND****1660**


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Within this ground are buried

John Hancock,

Samuel Adams,

and Robert Treat Paine,

Signers of the Declaration of Independence ;

**GOVERNORS**

Richard Bellingham,

William Dummer,

James Bowdoin,

Increase Sumner,

James Sullivan

and

Christopher Gore ;

Lieut. Governor Thomas Cushing ;

Chief Justice Samuel Sewall ;

Ministers John Baily,

Samuel Willard,

Jeremy Belknap

and

John Lathrop.

1660

Within this ground are buried  
The victims of the Boston Massacre,  
March 5, 1770.

Josiah Franklin and wife,  
(Parents of Benjamin Franklin)

**Peter Faneuil,** **Paul Revere;**

**and**

**John Phillips,**

**First Mayor of Boston.**

## ROXBURY BURIAL GROUND

Here were buried

## GOVERNORS

|                                        |                                  |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Thomas Dudley 1653,</b>             | <b>Joseph Dudley 1720;</b>       |
| <b>Chief Justice Paul Dudley 1752,</b> | <b>Col. William Dudley 1743;</b> |

## MINISTERS

John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians, 1690,  
Thomas Walter 1725, Nehemiah Walter 1750,  
Oliver Peabody 1752, Amos Adams 1775,  
Eliphalet Porter 1833;  
and  
Benjamin Tompson, Schoolmaster and Physician, 1714.

## DORCHESTER BURIAL GROUND

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Here were buried

### GOVERNORS

William Stoughton 1701,

William Tailer 1732;

### MINISTERS

Richard Mather 1669,

Josiah Flint 1680,

John Danforth 1730,

Jonathan Bowman 1775,

Moses Everett 1813,

Thaddeus Mason Harris 1842;

Major Gen. Humphrey Atherton 1661,

William Pole, Schoolmaster, 1674,

John Foster, First Printer of Boston, 1681,

Isaac Royal 1739,

James Blake, Annalist, 1750,

and Ebenezer Clapp 1881.

Mr. A. C. GOODELL, Jr., followed with this paper: —

History scarcely shows a character of such mark, less sordid and less selfishly ambitious than Samuel Adams; and his example of claiming nothing for himself seems to have been taken as a justification of the indifference which has suffered the events of his early life to pass into oblivion, and of the cool presumption with which he has been stripped of his laurels to crown others. It was, therefore, with a profound sense of gratitude to the author that, nearly ninety years after the Declaration of Independence, those who felt the importance of an extended memoir of Adams received from the press the first comprehensive biography of him who did more than any other one man to foster the idea of national supremacy in the Colonies. Nor was this feeling of gratitude weakened by the deplorable deficiency of this biography in those interesting personal minutiae which it was hoped that private correspondence and family tradition would have supplied. It was a cause for thankfulness, rather, that so much had been rescued from oblivion.

As the distance of the author from the town and province records, and from the libraries of Boston, in which are pre-

served many rare and unique memorials of the revolutionary era, immensely increased the difficulty of compilation, those interested in this biography have been proportionably appreciative of the patient toil which, with a devotion almost filial, he bestowed upon his three volumes. This appreciation cannot be better manifested than by contributing for the perfecting of the book (or of another that may grow out of it) whatever comes to our knowledge that may enlarge the narrative or correct an error.

In this spirit I call your attention to some memoranda from the public records that will correct the following passage in the author's note on page 38 of the first volume. The author says:—

“Examination of every statute upon the subject from the earliest time under the Province Charter of 1692, down to 1785, will show that no sureties were ever required of tax-collectors by any law of the Province during that period. It is quite certain that neither Samuel Adams nor any other collector of taxes of his time, either in Boston or in any other town of the Province, ever gave sureties or surety for the performance of the duty of collector. Bonds by collectors of taxes, with sureties, are of much later origin. The stringent provisions of law during that period to urge collectors of taxes up to a punctual and vigorous execution of their duties, by necessary implication show that they had no sureties, &c.”

Now, as I shall presently show, this explicit and reiterated assertion that Samuel Adams gave no bond as collector is wholly wrong; and the strangest feature of this earnest denial is not that it could have been conclusively rebutted by a brief examination of the town clerk's files in the City Hall, but that it was entirely unnecessary to the general proposition which he was endeavoring to maintain,—that the charge of defalcation made against Adams in the third volume of Hutchinson's History, and to which I shall hereafter refer more particularly, is without foundation.

Having had occasion recently to inquire into the circumstances that led to the passage, in 1769, of “An Act to enable Robert Pierpont to collect the taxes uncollected by Samuel Adams, late collector of taxes for the town of Boston,”\* I found that though there seems, indeed, to have been no law of the Province expressly requiring such security, it had been the custom from a very early period for collectors of taxes in Boston, as often as they were chosen, to give bond, with

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\* 1769-70, chap. 3: Province Laws, vol. v. p. 27.

sureties, to the town treasurer, for the faithful performance of their duty; and that Adams, notwithstanding the statement of his biographer that he first appeared in public life as a collector of taxes, in 1764, held that office from 1756 to 1764, inclusive, and gave a new bond every year during that period. Adams's last bond, given in 1764, a copy of which I have in my possession,\* was in the penalty of £5,000, and, thereon, Robert Pierpont and Benjamin Hallowell were sureties. In 1765 he was again chosen collector, but did not accept the trust; and the next September he was elected a representative to the General Court, from the town of Boston. This was the beginning of his legislative career, upon which he entered only about a month before the act of Parliament, known as the Stamp-Act, was appointed to go into operation.

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\* The following is a literal transcript of this bond:—

Know all Men by these Presents that we Samuel Adams Gentleman, Benjamin Hallowell Esq. Robert Pierpont Gentleman all of Boston in the County of Suffolk and Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England are held and stand firmly bound and obliged unto David Jeffries of Boston aforesaid Gentleman & Treasurer of said Town in the full and just sum of Five Thousand Pounds Lawful Money of said Province to be paid unto the said David Jeffries Treasurer as aforesaid or to his successors in said Office to the true payment whereof we bind ourselves our Heirs Executors and Administrators Jointly and Severally, firmly by these Presents. Sealed with our Seals, Dated the 28<sup>th</sup> Day of November Anno Domini One Thousand Seven Hundred and sixty-four, and in the Fifth Year of His Majestys Reign.

The Condition of the above written Obligation is such that whereas the Town of Boston at a regular Meeting of the Freeholders and Inhabitants of said Town on the Twelfth Day of March last did Elect and Choose the above bounden Samuel Adams to Collect all such Rates Assessments and Sums of Money as shall or may be committed to him to Collect of the Inhabitants [*Sic*] of the Town of Boston aforesaid within the present Year, which Office of Collector aforesaid he the said Samuel Adams hath accepted, and to the faithful discharge and execution thereof been duly sworn.

If Therefore the said Samuel Adams shall well and faithfully Collect and Levy all such Rates Assessments Taxes Sum and Sums of Money as shall be laid and Assessed on the Inhabitants of said Town of Boston for their Town County and Province Tax, and for which he shall have sufficient Warrant according to Law, and shall do and render a true and faithful account thereof and pay in the same to the Treasurer of said Town County and Province for the time being or his Successors in that Office according to the direction To him given in the Warrant made out or that shall be made out and committed to him, and also according to the Vote of the said Town relating to the Time allowed for the Collecting and paying in the same, and all without fraud, then the aforewritten Obligation to be void, but in default thereof to remain in full force and virtue.

Signed Sealed & Deliver'd in presence of

by M<sup>r</sup> ADAMS & PIERPONT

TIMOTHY KNEELAND

FRA<sup>s</sup> SKINNER

REBECCA HALLOWELL }  
MARTHA HALLOWELL } for M<sup>r</sup> HALLOWELL

SAM<sup>l</sup> ADAMS

BENJ<sup>a</sup> HALLOWELL

ROB<sup>t</sup> PIERPONT

SEAL

SEAL

SEAL

It appears that, at the expiration of Adams's term of office, there remained, of the taxes committed to him for several years, a considerable sum uncollected and unpaid to the town and province treasurers. No authority was given by law to collectors to transmit their lists to their successors for collection; and, except in case of the death of a collector, there was no legal way to avoid responsibility for the whole amount of taxes committed for collection (less the abatements regularly made) except by the interposition of the Legislature. But Adams's constituents, who comprised a majority of the legal voters at the town meetings, deemed it proper that, in the pursuit of his important labors as a representative, he should not be burdened with the additional and harassing duty of collecting arrears of taxes; especially as the law exempting representatives from compulsory service as collectors seemed to imply that the duties of the two offices might be incompatible. Accordingly, at a town meeting held March 13, 1769, the inhabitants voted to relieve Mr. Adams from further duty as collector, and chose Robert Pierpont, one of his sureties, in his place, and, at the same time, voted to apply to the Legislature for a confirmation of this proceeding. The result was the enactment of the statute of which I have spoken. The passage in Hutchinson's History in regard to Adams's services as collector, to which I have alluded, and which Mr. Wells's note was written to controvert, runs thus:—

“He was afterwards a collector of taxes for the town of Boston and made defalcation, which caused an additional tax upon the inhabitants.”

And, in another place,—

“The benefit to the town from his defence of their liberties he supposed an equivalent to his arrears as their collector; and the prevailing principle of the party, that the end justified the means, probably quieted the remorse he must have felt, from robbing men of their characters, and injuring them more than if he had robbed them of their estate.”\*

This charge of defalcation is a grave one; and if deserved in this case it is unfortunate for the historian's reputation for candor that he has not supported his charge by a statement of particulars.

As the case appears upon the record, no defalcation or

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\* Hist. Mass., vol. iii. pp. 274, 275.

other delinquency is shown, in the sense of embezzlement or failure to account for all the sums collected. It does, indeed, appear that not all the assessments committed to Adams for collection were collected; but it by no means follows that this failure was the result of collusion or negligence.

The period through which Adams served as collector was one of unexampled pecuniary distress to the people of the Province, and of Boston in particular. Circumstances more trying to a collector of taxes who was possessed of humane feelings, and was at the same time impressed with a sense of the importance of a faithful performance of his trust, are hardly conceivable; nor, when we consider the financial condition of the people of Boston at that time, is it surprising that the town records show that none of the tax-collectors of Boston during this period were able fully to collect the assessments committed to them.

Hostilities with the French, which continued for full seven years of this period, had not only enormously increased the public taxes, but, by reason of the incident embargoes, and captures of our shipping by the enemy, foreign and coast-wise commerce was greatly interrupted, and serious injury was wrought to the fisheries. So, since by the policy of the Board of Trade manufactures had been systematically discouraged, the people were left to depend upon agriculture as the foundation of their subsistence, and as the principal source of whatever profit it was possible to make above a bare living. During this period, too, the stringent measures adopted by the Legislature for closing the affairs of the Land Bank distressed many of the more considerable of the debtor class, and brought financial embarrassment and ruin to themselves and to their principal creditors. In the midst of these adversities the great fire of 1760 occurred in Boston, by which nearly one tenth of the town was destroyed, and the number of dependent poor was greatly increased. Again, in 1764, before the benefits arising from the remittances received from England, for reimbursing part of the expenses of the war, had been diffused among all classes, the small-pox, which had been constantly dreaded and never fully eradicated, broke out with alarming violence in Boston. Numbers of the inhabitants fled from this pestilence to the neighboring towns, there to remain until they could return without danger from contagion, or sought a permanent refuge in distant places beyond the reach of the tax-gatherer.

The importance of the events just referred to, as bearing upon the question of Mr. Adams's fidelity as a collector, is

vastly increased when it is remembered that, until the passage of the provincial statute of 1763,\* the law not only restricted the collector, in enforcing his collections, to the single process of *distress*, but left him remediless in the cases especially provided for by that statute. Indeed, as will presently appear, that statute was enacted to provide for the difficulties which the collectors of taxes in Boston encountered during the period we are considering. To crown the list of discouraging circumstances that beset the unfortunate collectors at this time, the parliamentary Stamp-Act, which was to take effect in November, 1765, — years before all the arrears of taxes were collected, — rendered it impossible, until its repeal, for a collector of taxes to take a valid bond, or to give a sufficient deed of conveyance of land sold by him for taxes; since the person appointed stamp commissioner refused the office and no stamps were issued.

During the time of Adams's service as collector it was twice found necessary to pass acts for the relief of bankrupts,† or to secure to creditors the property of insolvent or absconding debtors. The lists of debtors proceeded against under those acts, as shown in the notes appended to the respective chapters in the new edition of the Province Laws, illustrate forcibly, both in the proportion of debtors belonging to Boston — being about two fifths of the one hundred and thirty-five persons against whom warrants were issued under the later act — and in the character and standing of the debtors, the severity of the injury inflicted on the merchants and business men of Boston, by the causes I have enumerated.

The rates of compensation to collectors in Boston had varied in different years from three to twelve per cent of the amount collected; and the collectors had more than once appealed to the town for a more generous allowance. During Adams's time the collectors had twice agreed to an equal division of the total percentage allowed to them, and this subject of compensation and the difficulty of collecting seem to have much occupied the minds of tax-payers and collectors, and even the post of tax-collector seems to have been generally considered as undesirable and unremunerative.‡

At the town meeting at which Adams declined a re-elec-

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\* 1763-64, chap. 18: Province Laws, vol. iv. p. 668.

† 1757-58, chap. 12, and 1764-65, chap. 35.

‡ Many other instances of "defective collectors" appear in the records about this period. And a little later there were instances, also, of actual defalcation and absconding, calling for legislative interference, but not in behalf of the defaulters. See 1770-71, chap. 19, and 1772-73, chap. 22.

tion, a committee was chosen to examine the state of the treasury, and report. This measure was evidently aimed against the delinquent collectors; and there is ground for the suspicion that some of Adams's political opponents took this means to find a pretext for defeating him as a candidate for the Legislature; since, the year before, he had lodged with the selectmen, to be by them laid before the town, a full and particular statement of all uncollected taxes for every year in which he had held the office. The report of this committee was made on the 14th of May, and showed that there were in the collectors' hands of town and province rates, including assessments not yet due, £18,126 distributed among the collectors as follows: John Ruddock, Esq., £1,400; Mr. Samuel Adams, £8,000; Mr. Jonathan Payson, £3,326; Mr. Sampson Salter, £2,440; Mr. John Grant, £2,960. The committee urged the expediency of a prompt collection of these amounts so as to enable the selectmen and overseers of the poor to make cash purchases, and to leave a considerable surplus in the treasury for future necessities, thereby allowing of a large reduction in the amount to be raised by taxation the next year.

At the March meeting in 1767, a committee appointed, upon the petition of Joseph Green and ten other inhabitants, to make the necessary inquiries of the province, county, and town treasurers, reported the amounts overdue from the several collectors to the respective treasurers for the years 1763 and 1764; by which Adams appears to have been indebted £4,029 7s. 9½d. It was thereupon voted to put his bond in suit. A vote was passed at the same time to sue the bond of John Ruddock, but this was subsequently reconsidered. The suits, however, were not to be prosecuted until May 20, 1767, "unless the bondsmen should desire it." Before May it seems that Mr. Adams had somewhat reduced his indebtedness.

The suit was brought in the Court of Common Pleas, by James Otis, attorney for David Jeffries, the town treasurer. The writ bears date, June 26, 1767, and was returnable at the July term. The declaration was in a simple form of debt on the bond. The defendant appeared and put in the following plea: —

"And the said Samuel reserving to himself ye privilege of waiving this plea and pleading anew at the court above for Issue pleads that he has fully comply'd with the condition of the obliga sued on and of this puts himself &c.

SAM<sup>l</sup> SWIFT."

To those who are not familiar with the technicalities of law-pleadings it may be well to say that the declaration having contained a profert of the bond; that is, an offer to produce it, the defendant should, regularly, have prayed "oyer," or, in other words, have asked that the condition of the bond be read to him, as was the ancient practice; but, at the time of this suit, the rule was for the defendant to set forth the condition of the bond from a copy furnished to him by the plaintiff, or, more commonly, from his own knowledge of it, and then allege such facts as would show that there was no cause of action against him. His plea was, therefore, irregular; and Otis, thereupon, demurred, as follows:—

"And the s<sup>d</sup> David consenting says that the plea afores<sup>d</sup> in manner afores<sup>d</sup> is insufficient and prays judgment for the money sued for and for his costs.  
J. OTIS."

The defendant joined in this demurrer, and the court overruled it.

It would be interesting to know upon what ground the court thus gave judgment for the defendant. As demurrers are dilatory pleas, the court may have deferred to an understanding between the parties that the case should go up to the Superior Court, on appeal, in this manner, to gain time for the defendant; and this surmise is rather confirmed by the fact that the sureties were not joined as defendants. However this may be, an appeal was taken, on which the plaintiff recognized to prosecute. Judgment appears to have been rendered in the appellate court against the defendant at the first term, for the whole penalty of the bond; but execution did not issue until March 8, 1768, and then for £1,463 3s. 10d. debt, exclusive of costs of suit, taxed at £4 8s. 6d., that being the actual balance found due on accounting with the town treasurer. Six days after the issue of this execution, a town meeting was held, in which it was voted to allow Mr. Adams "six months' further time to collect his outstanding debts that he may be enabled thereby to compleat the obligation of his bond." A movement was immediately made by Mr. Adams's opponents to have this vote reconsidered; and, upon a petition therefor signed by Foster Hutchinson and nineteen others, a town meeting was called for that purpose, to be held March 22; but at this meeting the town refused to reconsider the vote, "by a great majority." At this meeting, also, Mr. Adams informed the inhabitants that he would, at the expiration of the additional time

allowed him by their vote, "lay a state of his affairs before the town."

Upon this vote of the town, the town treasurer ordered the execution to be returned in no part satisfied, which the sheriff did, accordingly, and no *alias* was issued until March 8, 1769. In the mean time the province treasurer issued a warrant of distress against Adams; and the town, at their meeting on the 22d of March, appointed a committee to wait upon him and entreat him to stay execution on the warrant, for six months, which he declined to do in a letter concluding thus:—

"I can appeal to Mr. Adams that I have treated him with great tenderness and delicacy. But as I have delivered to Mr. Sheriff an execution against him, by order of the General Court, I do not think it prudent, nor safe for me, to give Mr. Greenleaf any particular directions concerning it. He no doubt knows his duty; if he fails in the execution of it he alone is accountable. H. GRAY.

TREAS<sup>RS</sup> OFFICE March, 23, 1768.  
To the Committee."

No special order of the General Court to this effect, it may be said in passing, has been discovered; and hence it is supposed that the treasurer referred to the general laws upon the subject of enforcing payments from collectors.

The *alias* execution was issued, as we have seen, March 8, 1769; and, at a town meeting held on the 13th of that month, the following proceedings appear to have taken place:—

"The Petition of M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Adams a late Collector of Taxes setting forth 'That he has exhibited a List of his outstanding Taxes to the Selectmen to be laid before the Town; and also a state of his Accounts praying that upon his paying the Balance thereof, the Town would order him a final discharge; and at the same Meeting make choice of a suitable Person to receive said List, and Collect the said Outstanding Taxes, or otherwise to act upon his Petition as to the Town shall seem meet' was again read according to order, & after a full and long debate had thereon; it was moved & the Question accordingly put—That a Committee be appointed to take M<sup>r</sup> Adams's Petition into Consideration, and Report as soon as may be; which passed in the Negative—Also moved that the List of Outstanding Taxes exhibited by said M<sup>r</sup> Adams to the Selectmen be read in this Meeting; which Question being put—passed in the Negative—Then a Motion was made and seconded, that the Prayer of the Petition be granted, and that a Person be now chosen to receive the said List, and Collect the Outstanding Taxes, and the Question being accordingly put—passed in the Affirmative by a very great majority—

"The Town then by a full Vote made choice of M<sup>r</sup> Robert Pierpont to receive the aforesaid List and Collect the Outstanding Taxes

"Voted that the Selectmen be and hereby are appointed a Committee to Petition the General Court at the next Session thereof praying for a conformation of the choice now made of M<sup>r</sup> Robert Pierpont, and that he may be impowered to Collect all such Taxes as have been at any time committed to the said M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Adams to Collect and now remains Outstanding; the said Pierpont to be accountable to the Town for such Sums as he shall Collect."\*

The Legislature thereupon passed the act, the title of which I have already given, ratifying these proceedings, which act, probably, also, had the effect of staying proceedings against Adams upon the warrant of distress issued by the province treasurer.

I have alluded to the act of 1763, and promised some further remarks upon it. The circumstances which led to the passage of this act are as follows:—

A suit at law having been brought by John Ruddock for the collection of a tax committed to him as collector, the Superior Court, in 1763, for the first time, decided that such an action would not lie, inasmuch as the law had given a remedy by distress. This case is reported in Quincy's Reports (p. 58), and the same point has been twice decided in the same manner by our Supreme Judicial Court,† which holds that the remedy provided by statute excludes all others. The rational ground for this opinion would seem to be not so much an objection to the multiplication of remedies, as the fact that a warrant of distress is itself an execution as potent and convenient as any equivalent process that would follow the judgment of a court.

This decision of the Superior Court seems to have alarmed the collectors of Boston; and accordingly we find that a bill was introduced in the Legislature of 1763–64 ‡ giving constables and collectors the option of proceeding either upon distraint or by action-at-law, in the collection of taxes. The consideration of this act having been postponed to a subsequent session, a meeting was called in Faneuil Hall; "to take the sense of" the town upon the measure. At this meeting, which was adjourned from the 6th to the 21st of September, 1763, this bill was not approved; but a committee which had been appointed previous to the adjournment, and of which

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\* Boston Town Records, vol. v. (1767–74), p. 126.

† 6 Mass. 44, and 8 Met. 393.

‡ May Session: June 15, General Court Records, vol. xxv. p. 76.

John Avery was chairman, having heard the collectors, examined into their difficulties in collecting the taxes, and considered "in what instances it may be expedient to enable the collectors to sue at Common Law," &c., reported four particulars, to which two additional clauses were added by the meeting,—the whole agreeing, substantially, with the provisions of the bill which was afterwards enacted. Briefly, this act conferred the power of proceeding by action-at-law (1) against trustees of insolvent and absconding debtors; (2) against the representatives of deceased delinquent taxpayers; (3) against persons removing to, and becoming inhabitants of, other towns, after being rated; (4) against the husbands of women marrying after being assessed; (5) against tax-payers remaining delinquent after the collector or constable had paid over his whole rate to the respective treasurers. These provisions are interesting as indicating some of the difficulties, unforeseen by the framers of the tax-acts, and perhaps suggested by the astuteness of counsel, which the collectors of taxes encountered before the passage of this act.

Upon a review of what I have presented, it seems evident that the persistent purpose of the inhabitants of Boston to protect Mr. Adams from the extreme operation of the laws against defective collectors,—a purpose of which the act confirming the choice of Robert Pierpont as his successor was the final manifestation; their election of him to the House of Representatives, while proceedings against him as collector were pending; his poverty, and his reputation for inflexible integrity, even among his political enemies, are all inconsistent with the charge against him clearly implied in the words used by Hutchinson; and it is only an act of justice to his memory to say, that neither the historian nor the contemporary records furnish any evidence to rebut the presumption that Mr. Adams's ill success as a collector was excusable, if not unavoidable.\*

At the conclusion of the reading of this paper, Judge CHAMBERLAIN rose and said:—

While listening to the interesting paper just read, it has occurred to me that Hutchinson's language was susceptible of an interpretation which is consistent with admitted facts, and, if accepted, would at the same time leave the character of

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\* I make no account of Gordon's statement; for however well-intentioned and careful that writer may usually have been, in this instance he only echoed the partisan cry, which the records sufficiently confute.

Samuel Adams cleared from the charge of dishonest appropriation of public money, and vindicate the truthfulness and candor of the historian.

Hutchinson's character as an historian was as high as his reputation as a patriot was low; while Adams's standing as a business man was as low as his eminence as a patriot was high.

The passage from Hutchinson is as follows: "He was afterwards a collector of taxes for the town of Boston, and made defalcation, which caused an additional tax upon the inhabitants." We should remember that Hutchinson is not responsible for the odious significance which the word defalcation has acquired in these latter days. It does not necessarily import a misuse of money: that is not its primary, nor even its secondary meaning. He does not say, nor do I think he meant to say, that Samuel Adams collected taxes and put them in his pocket. The defalcation was in not collecting them; which is quite another matter, though doubtless a serious neglect of duty, resulting in the same loss to the inhabitants as if he had collected and misappropriated the taxes.

A collector of taxes was under heavy responsibilities, but his powers were commensurate. Besides giving bond with sureties and making oath for the faithful performance of his duties as a collector, he was charged with the aggregate amount of taxes assessed upon the persons and estates named in his warrant; and the only way he could be relieved from personal liability was, either to collect the taxes and pay them into the treasury, or cause them to be abated.

But there was nothing peculiar in Samuel Adams's responsibility. He shared it in common with all collectors of taxes in the Province; and as we hear of no final complaint in respect to the other four collectors in Boston holding office at the same time, it is fair to presume that they found no insuperable obstacles to the performance of the duties of their office, thus avoiding personal liability and public scandal.

But if his responsibilities were onerous, he had ample powers enabling him to discharge them. Armed with his tax-warrant, without judgment of court he could seize, sell, and convey real and personal estate, subject to tax, for unpaid taxes; and I presume he could follow, arrest, and imprison those delinquent in the payment of personal taxes. If so, such taking of the body was payment of the tax debt, as in other cases, and satisfied the warrant.

Our associate finds some excuse for Adams's defalcation in the collection of taxes, in the depressed state of trade, the

prevalence of the small-pox, and the losses occasioned by the extraordinary fire in 1760. Whatever validity there may be in these considerations, they make no more for Samuel Adams than for his four associate collectors in Boston, who, in the more diligent prosecution of their work, found no occasion to plead them.

It is certain that Samuel Adams was very largely in arrears in the collection of the taxes committed to him. For this he was sued, and the judgment of the court was against him. The report of a committee of his fellow-citizens, presumably not unfriendly, shows the same thing. The same inference must be drawn from Adams's petition for relief, and the final action of the town thereon. But nothing that can be regarded as conclusive evidence has reached us that Samuel Adams ever appropriated to his own use a dollar of the town's money. Nor does Hutchinson, if I read him correctly, accuse him of that. Hutchinson was a very careful historian, not only with respect to his facts, but also as to his phrases. But since this question has been reopened, perhaps it ought not to be passed over without mention that Gordon, writing not remotely from the period, expressly makes the graver charge; and there are some circumstances indicating that even Adams's friends feared that he was as careless of the public money as of his own.

Samuel Adams had great virtues, but he was not a good collector of taxes. He was not even a good man of business. Neither in the Provincial Assembly nor in the Continental Congress did he shine as a practical legislator. His crude notions as to maintaining the army and conducting the war gave Washington infinite trouble; and when he became governor, he did not administer his office particularly well.

That anybody should ever have thought to make Samuel Adams a collector of taxes is a marvel. His hatred of taxes was not so much a conviction as an instinct. Apart from his unbusiness-like habits, he was about as well fitted to collect taxes as Garrison to personally conduct a coffee, or Andrew to work a guillotine.

Samuel Adams has come down to us as an incorruptible patriot and honest man, and such doubtless will ever be his character in history. With his zeal, his courage, and his constancy, he became the greatest single personal force in bringing on and maintaining the struggle for independence. But he could not collect taxes. He tried, but without success. His distaste for the work, his unfitness for it, his complete absorption in other matters of transcendent importance,

led him to neglect, or, as Hutchinson more accurately says, to make defalcation in the performance of the duties of his office.\*

Dr. ELLIS then spoke as follows:—

After the separation of Count Rumford from his second wife, the widow of the eminent chemist, Lavoisier, the Count found relief from this infelicitous marriage by another domestic arrangement, in his house at Auteuil, where he died, Aug. 21, 1814. Soon after his decease there was born to him a son, who, under the surname of Lefevre, was an accomplished gentleman, and an officer of rank and distinction in the French army. He was killed at Sebastopol. He left a son named Joseph Amedie Lefevre. The Countess Rumford, the only legitimate child of her father, having returned to this country after his death, died Dec. 2, 1852, in her seventy-ninth year, at her birth-place in Concord, New Hampshire. She left a handsome legacy to her nephew, coupled with the condition, readily complied with, that he should take the name of Joseph Amedie Rumford. He also is known as an officer of rank and distinction in the French army. I have had the pleasure for several years of a correspondence with him begun by himself. In a letter recently received from him, he writes that, unskilled as he is in our tongue, he has toiled through the pages of my not small book on the Indians, with the help of a dictionary, as he had previously done with the Memoir of his grandfather.

Accompanying his last letter, he gives me a singular token of his kindness, by sending me, what I should think he would have been unwilling to part with, three souvenirs of his grandfather, which I have in my hand and will pass round for inspection. It may be that sometime they will find a deposit in our cabinets. They are:—

1. The plaque of decoration of a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, given to Count Rumford by the Elector of Bavaria.

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\* That the foregoing construction of Hutchinson's language is not fanciful, appears when we consider the connection in which he uses the same terms, in his message to the House, July 14, 1772:—

"If, when you declare that the Assemblies, ever since the charter, have made an adequate provision for the support of the Governor, you intend a provision suitable to the dignity of his station, and not merely such, as in the judgment of the House, the particular merits of the Governor might require, you will not be able to maintain your assertion; on the contrary, it evidently appears, that in some instances the support of the Governor has been delayed until he has complied with the measures of the Assembly, and in others, *defalcations have been made from it*, in order to effect the same purpose." — *Speeches of the Governors of Massachusetts* (edited by Alden Bradford), Boston, 1818, p. 335.

It is an eight-pointed star of fine gold spangles, containing within a Maltese cross, the arms of which are inscribed with the legend, *Pro - Fide - Rege - & Lege*.

2. An original portrait of the Count, in sepia, upon velvet, taken shortly before his death, and given by the Countess Sarah to his son.

3. The case of mathematical instruments used by the Count, — pencil, dividers, scale, &c. These are of the finest workmanship, and admirably preserved, considering that they may date back a hundred years. The case bears on a silver plate the initial letters, B. T., — Benjamin Thompson.

Mr. HIGGINSON called the attention of the Society to a curious little unpublished poem, found upon the fly-leaf of a journal kept by the Rev. Peter Thacher of Milton, Massachusetts, and beginning March 1, 1682. The lines are in the handwriting of Mr. Thacher, and are followed by the note, "Y<sup>s</sup> were made by my Dear Father 1662"; the father thus designated being the Rev. Thomas Thacher of the Old South Church, Boston, 1620-70. The chief interest of the little poem lies in the fact that it gives three instances of the employment of a certain word now obsolete, and not employed, so far as is known, by any other American writer. The verses are as follows, *verbatim et literatim*: —

"RA'TH EC'H REAPETH.

"Rath Each good reapeth holy diligence  
first Christ to git y<sup>r</sup> prudent Innocence  
Then learning Sage to understand a right  
From blackest darknesse what the clearest light  
Ra'th preacheth hee y<sup>r</sup> lives to god betimes  
Preserv'd by Grace yet keeps himselfe from Crimes  
Be y<sup>r</sup> thy study y<sup>r</sup> my Son and thou  
With Grace & Glory crown'd shalt have thy Brow."

Mr. Higginson remarked that the English of the early Puritan writers in America was a very interesting subject, which had as yet been very inadequately treated. The word *rath* or *rathe* (he said) is an unexceptionable English word, meaning simply "soon" or "early," and being the obsolete positive of which only the familiar comparative survives in *rather*. It is used by Langland and by Wiclif; appears in Chaucer's "Shipmanne's Tale," —

"What aileth you so *rathe* for to arise";

in Spenser's "Faerie Queene," —

“Too *rathe* cut off by practise criminell”;

and in Milton's “*Lycidas*,” —

“Bring the *rathe* primrose that forsaken dies,”

this phrase having been borrowed by him, as has been suggested, from an obscure poem in “*England's Helicon*,” —

“And made the *rathe* and timely primrose grow.”

It was thus a familiar word down to 1662, when the muse of the Rev. Thomas Thacher employed it. Among modern English poets it has been rarely used, though it is to be found in Tennyson, in “*In Memoriam*,” cviii.; and those who have followed the unhappy career of Hartley Coleridge will recall the plaintive confession, —

“A *rathe* December blights my early May.”

It is also probable that we have this word preserved to us in the pears called rare-ripe [*rathe*-ripe?] which mature early.

It is to be noticed that in all these cases the word *rathe* is used in its simplest sense, with no tinge of metaphor; while in Mr. Thacher's use of it there is a farther suggestion of excellence or preference. “*Rath* each good reapeth” means that diligence reapeth early; “*Ra'th* preacheth he,” that is, he preacheth early. This use of the word to imply preferableness gives us a key to the similar transfer of meaning in the case of the word *rather*. This too was at first used in a literal sense. When Spenser says in his “*Shepherd's Calendar*” (February), —

“The *rather* lambs bene starved with cold,”

he means the earlier lambs, using the word in a literal sense, now lost. Our Puritan poet shows us how the transition was made to the figurative sense, and thus illustrates the evolution of a word.

Another circumstance is finally to be noticed, which may have a bearing on this historical process. In two cases out of three the word, as written by Mr. Thacher the younger, is not *rathe* or *rath*, but *ra'th*. It was suggested to him (Mr. Higginson), by high authority, Mr. Richard Grant White, that this apostrophe may mark the transitional stage of the word from *rathe* to *rath*; the apostrophe denoting the elision of the *e*, but having slipped into the wrong place. He justly

points out that this awkwardness in using the apostrophe was not then uncommon; and we have, curiously enough, another instance of this in the very next word of the title, where the writer, wishing to mark the elision of the letter *a* from *each*, writes it *ec'h* instead of *e'ch*. It would be interesting to hear of any other instance of the employment of the word *rathe* or *rath* by any early American writer.

Mr. WINSOR gave a description of a book containing several tracts which were all published in 1624, and the book is marked "Thomas Prince his book," in the well-known hand of that collector. The binding is of Prince's time, and the clipping of Prince's notes in the margins shows it to have been bound after he had made his annotations. The tracts are six in number, but only two (Nos. 1 and 4) are of interest for students of American history.

I. "Good News from New England. . . . By E. W." The only other copies known to me of this tract by Edward Winslow ("so Purchas says," as Prince adds in a manuscript note) are two in the Carter-Brown Library at Providence (one with an additional paragraph in the titlepage, making mention of a "brief Relation," which appears at the end of the book), one in Mr. Deane's collection at Cambridge, and one in the Dowse Library of this Society. The Aspinwall Catalogue shows a copy which may be at present in the Barlow Library in New York. A copy once in Harvard College Library is no longer to be found. It was from this copy that Dr. Young printed in his "Chronicles of the Pilgrims." Prince has carefully read the present copy, annotating it or making catch-marks throughout, several times citing Bradford and Morton, and once pointing out the printer's error as compared with a passage in John Smith. On a fly-leaf he has a long note, in which, after collating Bradford and Morton, he says: "By which it seems he [Winslow] must have left London in the beginning of February, and must have printed his relation there between the end of October, 1623, and the end of January, 1623-4; and I know it is the custom of the London printers to begin the year on their books at Michaelmas, so that after Sept. 29, 1623, they will date them at the bottom of the titlepage, 1624." The titlepage bears an early autograph of "John Adams."

On the reverse of the title is this certificate:—

At a Court of Commissioners for settling, adjusting, and determining the boundary of the Colony of Rhode Island, eastward towards the province of the Massachusetts Bay, This book was produced in Court by the

agents of the Province to the end they might give several passages therein contained as evidence; but the agent for the Colony opposed, and the Court rejected the same. Dated at the Court of Commissioners sitting in Providence in the Colony of Rhode Island, the twenty-third day of June, Anno Dom. 1741.

Attest: WILLIAM BALLAD.

It was perhaps through the borrowing for this purpose that this volume became separated from the rest of the Prince Library, now in the Boston Public Library. Prince, however, is known to have sold some of his books. Cf. Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., vol. xvii. p. 174.

II. "Votivae Angliae, or The Desires and Wishes of England, containd in a Patheticall Discourse presented to the King on New-Yeaes Day last, wherein are unfolded . . . reasons to persuade his majestie to drawe his Royall sword for the restoring of the Pallatynat and Electorat to his sonne in law. . . . Written by S. R. N. I. Printed at Vtrecht, MDCXXIII."

III. "The Saint's Advantage . . . a Sermon preached at the Hage the 18 of May. By Iohn Wing, an unworthy minister of the Gospell and Pastour to the English Church at Flushing in Zeeland . . . London . . . 1624."

Prince says in a note: "This Wing was Pastor of the English Puritan Chh. at Middleborough in Zeeland, whose widow bro't her children to Sandwich in New England, w<sup>o</sup> afterwards turned Quakers, & from w<sup>m</sup> the Wings at Sandwich, Wareham, Rochester, and Dartmouth are derived."

IV. "A plaine Pathway to Plantations . . . With certaine motives for a present Plantation in Newfoundland above the rest. . . . By Richard Eburne of Hengstridge in the Countie of Somerset. Printed by G. P. for John Marriot, 1624."

It is divided into three parts, each with a separate title; but the paging is continuous. The second part is dedicated to Sir George Calvert, who in 1620 had bought the south-eastern peninsula of Newfoundland, and in 1623 had received a patent of it under the name of Avalon,—a patent later the model of that of Maryland.

There is a copy of this tract in the Carter-Brown Library; and another belongs to John Holmes, Esq., of Cambridge. Sabin only mentions the Carter-Brown copy, and calls it a volume of great rarity.

V. "The new art of lying, covered by Jesuites under the vaile of Equivocation, discovered and disproved by Henry Mason. London . . . 1624."

The autograph of Rowland Cotton is on the titlepage.

VI. "The Foot out of the Snare: with a detection of sundry late practices and impostures of the priests and Jesuits in England. Whereunto is added a Catalogue of such bookes as in this author's knowledge have been vented within two yeeres last past in London by the Priests and their agents. By John Gee . . . of Exon Colledge in Oxford. At London, . . . 1624."

Mr. Winsor said that the book belonged to the Adams Library in Quincy; and was brought to his attention by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, Jr.

Mr. SLAFTER exhibited a photographic copy of the Royal Arms, which, before the American Revolution, were in the Council Chamber of the Old State House. On the evacuation of Boston in March, 1776, these Arms appear to have taken their departure with the British troops. They remained in Halifax, Nova Scotia, some time, but in 1785 they were sent to St. John, New Brunswick, where they were first put up in a temporary church building, in which the courts held their sessions, the business of the town was transacted, and on Sundays the service of the English Church was performed. On the completion of the then new Trinity Church in 1791, they were removed to the new edifice, where they remained till the great fire in 1877, when they were rescued while the church was in flames. They are now re-established in the new Trinity Church recently erected in St. John.

A letter from Mr. William B. Earle, addressed to the Society, and relating to certain statements concerning the Quakers in the eighteenth volume of the Proceedings, was referred to the committee on the publication of the Proceedings.

Mr. DEANE presented in the name of Mr. Henry Clay Short, of Boston, a policy of insurance issued in 1798 by the Massachusetts Fire Insurance Company, the earliest (1795) incorporated insurance company in the State. The policy was ornamented with a finely engraved view of State Street, which included an excellent picture of the Old State House, and other buildings. One side of the street is represented as in flames, with fire-engines playing upon them,—an imaginary scene, and a fit device for an insurance company to bear on its policies.

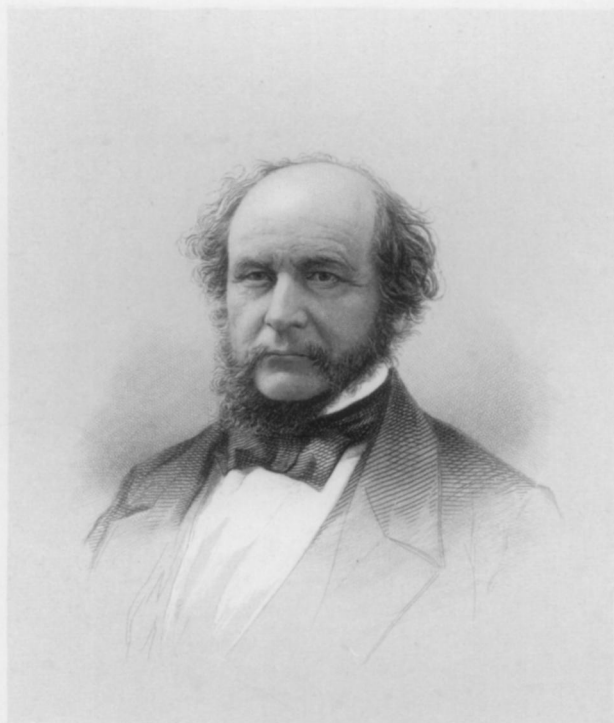
A memoir of the late George B. Emerson, which had been prepared at the request of the Society by the Rev. R. C. Waterston, was announced by Mr. Deane as ready for the press.

MEMOIR  
OF  
GEORGE BARRELL EMERSON, LL.D.  
BY ROBERT C. WATERSTON.

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IN the town of Wells, Maine (then a part of Massachusetts), Sept. 12, 1797, George B. Emerson was born ; and in March, 1881, at the house of his son-in-law, Hon. John Lowell, at Chestnut Hill, Brookline, he died, at the advanced age of eighty-four. His father was an able physician, a graduate of Harvard, a man of uncommon ability, with scholarly tastes and acquirements. Beloved and respected, he not only had a wide professional practice, but he made the schools a special object of his care. In the choice and appointment of teachers he was consulted, and as a visitor of the district schools his face was familiar, while his counsel and encouragement were always welcome. He had the right word both for parents and pupils, and exerted a beneficent influence wherever he went. Mr. Emerson's grandfather was a clergyman in Hollis, New Hampshire, and he not only was a very acceptable preacher, but he was widely known through all the county of Hillsborough for the pre-eminent skill with which he fitted young men for college. Thus the rare gift of teaching seemed to have been transmitted from generation to generation. As an inherited quality it had come down from father to son, not evidently wearing itself out, but gaining, with time, fresh impulse and inspiration.

Mr. Emerson's boyhood had nothing in it of special excitement. He was contented and happy with the simplest method of life. Quiet in his manners, he was at the same time deeply in earnest. He had the most beautiful balance of character. There never appeared to be with him any great effort in acquiring knowledge, and when acquired it seemed to form a natural part of himself and had no tendency to be forgotten.



Eng<sup>d</sup> by H. W. Smith from a *Portrait* by Southworth & Hawes.

*Geo. B. Emerton -*

Let us look at the school-room. The building was such as is generally used for a common country school. It pretended to nothing more. It had the advantage of the watchful care of his father, Dr. Samuel Emerson, who, if the windows were broken or clapboards torn away, would at once send and have them repaired, so that there was not the disgrace of unreasonable dilapidation. But in justice it must be said that the teaching and discipline within the school always held the place of supreme importance. Only in the winter months did George attend school. In the summer he worked upon his father's farm and in the garden. At first thought, this may appear to have been a serious privation. Perhaps to many young people it would have proved so; but George always accounted this arrangement a piece of great good fortune. It gave him that out-of-door life, the benefit of which he felt through all his after years.

He worked with constant diligence,—sowing the early seed, watching each stage of growth, and gathering the autumnal harvest. Work on the farm he liked, and never grew weary of it. Every implement used he became thoroughly acquainted with. His own conviction was, that active life under the open sky tended to quicken his powers of observation, and was the best possible experience for him to have gone through. The most fragile plant he studied with unwearied care, and not a tree of the forest escaped his notice. The oak, the beech, the maple, the pine, the spruce, the hemlock, all won his attention, and revealed to him some secret law of their being.

Preparatory to his presenting himself at Cambridge, he attended for a time the Dummer Academy at Byfield, where he devoted himself to Latin and Greek. Any additional preparation for college was made at home, under the care of his father. In 1813 he entered Harvard, and commenced his college life. Among his classmates were George Bancroft, Caleb Cushing, S. J. May, S. E. Sewall, and Stephen Salisbury. At that time President Kirkland was at the head of the college, Edward Everett was tutor in Latin, Professor Farrar was head of the mathematical department, while Dr. Hedge, Dr. Henry Ware, and George Ticknor held responsible positions. Such men could not but give life to the whole university.

Two letters have been received from those who were prominent in his class,—one from the Hon. Stephen Salisbury, and the other from George Bancroft, the historian. Mr. Salisbury writes:—

"My own rooms at Cambridge were at a distance from the college, which prevented that frequent intercourse which we might otherwise have enjoyed.

"We were therefore at that time not intimate, but when we did meet, it was always pleasantly. Our mature friendship sprang up in the last quarter of his life, rebuking the common notion that the happiness of love is the privilege of the young. . . . I can remember, but I cannot describe, the pleasure I had in Mr. Emerson's society and in his correspondence. That the enjoyment was mutual is proved, not only by his cordial welcome, but more tenderly and unequivocally by the neatly kept file of my occasional and not frequent letters which his daughter sent me after his decease.

"Such personal reminiscences as you ask will not be desired. You know, and can learn, all the particulars of his life. You appreciate and love his genial and wholesome character, and you will give us a memoir in which the old and the young will find pleasure and instruction."

Mr. Bancroft says : —

NO. 1623 H STREET, WASHINGTON, D. C.  
18th May, 1882.

MY DEAR SIR, — George B. Emerson, of my class in Harvard, was so industrious, and so exact in the discharge of all his duties, that there is no story to tell about him. He was very sweet and amiable; always cheerful, and very industrious; so regular that he was distinguished from others of his family name as *Pater* Emerson. I remember that at one time he gave great attention to mathematics, and at all times to the study of Greek; having done as much or more than any one of us, in reading not only what was required, but a good deal more in the historians, especially Herodotus. I remember nothing of him that was not pure and ingenuous. He was one of our best scholars, and so far as I know never had the slightest jar with any one member of the class in the whole period of our course. I have tasked my memory for incidents, but were I to write a much longer letter, I should only have to repeat what I have already said, under different forms.

Yours truly,

GEO. BANCROFT.

To the Rev. R. C. WATERSTON, Boston.

These letters from his old classmates are proof of the respect and affection in which he was held. Indeed, it may well be said that the affectionate respect extended towards him was universal. It was seen throughout the whole college life. The president, professors, and students all united in this feeling, and it evidently continued to the end of his career without abatement. That which moulded him into such a noble manhood, giving to him maturity of judgment, imparting an elevated tone to every thought, was not the college textbooks, whether Latin or Greek; it was the spirit which ani-

mated the whole body both of professors and students. Recall, for a moment, Kirkland and Bowditch, Ticknor and Norton, Hedge and Ware, Frisbie and Farrar, Cushing and Everett, Salisbury and Bancroft. Can any one think of such a company of men, and not feel their quickening power? Stimulated by companionship like this, the only real trouble was that the mind found little opportunity for rest. Mr. Emerson attempted to make four hours' sleep balance twenty hours given to work. As the result of this overdoing and wrongdoing, first the eyes gave out, and he became nearly blind; then the whole physical system broke down, and he was forced to go home and put himself under his father's professional care. He was reading Xenophon and Herodotus, Hesiod and Pliny and Cicero; and yet the time came when the over-taxed eyes were obliged to cease working. Having read all Homer except the last book of the *Odyssey*, worn out by over-exertion, he sank midway. He knew then, full well, that he had been unfaithful to that sound sense which generally governed his actions. "My only consolation," he writes, "in regard to this misfortune, was that it gave me time to mature my acquaintance with my college friends. The most important of the many advantages of a college education is the opportunity of becoming well acquainted with persons of one's own age, and of forming intimacies with the best and most congenial."

While at Cambridge, he was appointed Tutor in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. Professor Farrar held, at that time, the chief position in this department. "His lectures," writes Mr. Emerson, "on Natural Philosophy and Astronomy I have never known surpassed or equalled."

During the college vacations, Mr. Emerson taught school, in accordance with the general custom. In the Sophomore year he was not well enough to teach. In the Junior year he took a school situated near the saw-mills at Saco, where he was called to govern as rude and boisterous a set of young people as could well be found. He speaks of a flame which one day burst from the windows of the old school-house, and in half an hour there was nothing left but a handful of ashes. In the Senior year he kept a school for ten or twelve weeks at Bolton, where he found pupils wholly to his taste, who made excellent progress and were worthy of all commendation.

Such was his early experience in school-teaching. He had just graduated from Harvard when he received a letter from President Kirkland, offering him the position of master in an

excellent private school recently established in Lancaster, Massachusetts, of which Jared Sparks had been the first teacher. The offer was accepted; and after what he had gone through in those district schools, scattered over the country, which, during the winter vacations, had been under his care, it was a new aspect of life to find himself in the beautiful village of Lancaster, and to enter upon a school whose arrangements were well ordered. The academy had been established through the generous efforts of Richard J. Cleveland and the friends who united with him. At that time the number of pupils was limited to twenty-five, and the salary was five hundred dollars a year. He became so popular a teacher, and had so remarkable a gift in the management of boys, that applications became numerous, and the attendance increased to forty-two members. Here he continued for two years; but at length, overtaxed by constant exertion, his health grew feeble, and he considered it wisest to accept an invitation he had received to become tutor in the mathematical department of Harvard College.

His next experience as an instructor was as head master of the English Classical School, or, as it is now called, the English High School. The establishment of such a school had long been felt as a necessity. Judge Shaw and others associated with him resolved upon a plan by which a school should be founded, combining many advantages and privileges, which would be the crowning achievement of our whole public-school system. In this work they had the approbation and assistance of Josiah Quincy and other prominent men, who determined to leave nothing undone to effect this purpose.

The school, with its past history of fifty years, may well be left to speak for itself. The whole community bears testimony to its worth. The design of its founders has been most successfully carried out. Mr. Emerson, the first teacher, imparted the right impulse. He appealed wisely and successfully to high motives. He addressed the most generous sentiments. He thought, at every step, as much of character as of intellect. "Strive not," he said to his pupils, "to surpass each other, — strive rather to surpass yourselves." From that day the work has been carried onward. Mr. Emerson left his impress upon the school. For two years he here taught, when he was urged with reiterated importunity to open a private school in the city for young ladies; and in April, 1823, this school, with thirty-two pupils, was duly opened, — a number which never grew less. The school was acknowledged by all to be unusually attractive. It had in

it nothing superficial. It rested neither upon formalism nor routine. Its aim was thought and discipline ; while, in imparting knowledge, it sought to lay also the foundations of a character which would result in a worthy life here and a blessed immortality hereafter. In his efforts as a teacher he aimed, under all circumstances, to develop that which was noblest, truest, and best.

But it was not simply as a teacher, or in the school-room, that Mr. Emerson exerted his power. Wherever a company of intelligent men were desirous to disseminate truth, he was ready to bear his part, whether they moved together as a body or acted as individuals. Difficulties never intimidated him. Many of the ablest societies in our community owe their usefulness, if not even their existence, to him. In the works of nature he everywhere beheld the proofs of a Supreme Intelligence, and was grateful if he could in any degree be to others the interpreter of the divine thought. He felt that the All-creative Mind was forever diffusing light, and that the finite mind, moved by a kindred spirit, may, according to its ability, unite in the same work.

One of the societies he was instrumental in forming was the Boston Mechanics' Institution, the object of which was mutual instruction in the sciences, as connected with the mechanic arts. This was in 1827. Dr. Bowditch was its first President. Judge Story was one of the early lecturers. Daniel Webster delivered an introductory address, after which George B. Emerson followed with a course of six lectures. Webster impressively says : —

“God seems to have proposed his material universe as a standing, perpetual study to his intelligent creatures ; where, ever learning. they can yet never learn all ; and if that material universe shall last till man shall have discovered all that is now unknown, but which, by the progressive improvement of his faculties, he is capable of knowing, it will remain through a duration beyond human measurement, and beyond human comprehension.”

The lectures that followed were an able exposition of the same great thought.

Through the efforts of Mr. Emerson, in 1830, an association of teachers and friends of education was formed, to take into consideration the condition of the schools, and to consult upon the best means adapted to promote their improvement. This became known as the American Institute of Instruction. It was voted that a memorial should be prepared by him and placed in the hands of the Governor, with the request that

it should be brought before the Legislature. In compliance with this vote an elaborate paper was prepared, so clear in its statements, so convincing in its appeals, so strong in its arguments, that both the Senate and the House of Representatives put aside for the time all other business, and determined to go thoroughly into this subject. To make this work more effectual, a Board of Education was formed, and the President of the Senate, Horace Mann, who was acknowledged to be the ablest member in either branch of the Legislature, resigned his position in the Senate, and was unanimously chosen Secretary of the Board, that he might devote his whole attention to the educational interests of the State. One of the results was the establishment of normal schools, in which Mr. Emerson felt a deep interest, always being present when he could render service, if other duties rendered it possible. These schools have now become intimately associated with Lexington, Newton, and Bridgewater, and an efficient body of teachers has received therein such a thorough education as has fitted them in the best possible manner for their important work.

It is interesting to observe how the threads in the web of life are, from time to time, taken up. Mr. Emerson's old friend, Edward Everett, who at college was tutor in Latin, and with whom he enjoyed personal friendship, now, as Governor of the Commonwealth, received his memorial, entering heartily into his plans, considering how they should best be presented to the Legislature, and how they could be made productive of the most desirable results.

About three years after leaving Cambridge, Mr. Emerson took a pedestrian journey to the White Mountains in company with several of his old college companions. His descriptions of this excursion are graphic. He climbed to the topmost summit of the mountains, where, as yet, no place of shelter had been erected, and where, as he writes, "all was savage and wild and desolate, as it was left by the hand of its Creator."

In 1874 he gave an address before the Society of Natural History, on Louis Agassiz, which was a worthy tribute to that remarkable man, whom he had known intimately for twenty-seven years, and for whom he cherished a strong affection. The day following, he was requested by Mr. Bouvé, the President of the Society, to furnish a copy of the remarks for the press. Fearing that what he had said was not worthy the subject, and that he had not done justice to his distinguished friend, he begged to be excused from printing his

remarks. In the following letter he frankly expressed his views, showing the modest estimate with which he looked upon his own work.

NO. 3 PEMBERTON SQUARE, JAN. 7, 1874.

REV. R. C. WATERSTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I listened with great interest and satisfaction to every thing that was said last evening by our President, Mr. Bouvé, and especially by you, — to all except what was said by myself. *That* seemed very poor. Now, will you not divest yourself of the kind partiality which I know you have always felt towards me, so far as to say frankly whether what I read would not better be forgotten than printed?

Yours truly,

GEORGE B. EMERSON.

Why should every poor thing which is honestly said, be printed?

Speaking of Agassiz, he says : —

“I found him the wisest, the most thoroughly well informed and communicative, the most warm-hearted, and the most modest man of science with whom, personally or by his works, I had ever become acquainted. The strong impression he made on me was made on almost all who ever listened to or even met him. It is not surprising that the news of the death of Agassiz caused a throb of anguish in millions of hearts. Such a death is a loss to mankind. We shall see his benignant face and hear his winning voice no more; but we have before us his example and his works. Let us dwell, for a few moments, on some features in his life and character as an inspiration and a guide. What a change has taken place in the whole civilized world, and especially in this country, in men’s estimation of the value and interest of natural history and the great work of teaching! To whom is that change more due than to Agassiz?

“He was endowed by nature with extraordinary gifts. His fascinating eye, his genial smile, his kindliness and ready sympathy, his generous earnestness, his simplicity and absence of pretension, his transparent sincerity, — these account for his natural eloquence and persuasiveness of speech, his influence as a man, and his attraction and power as a teacher.

“Agassiz’s universality of study and thought suggests a precious lesson. It is never safe to give one’s self entirely to one study or to one course of thought. The full power of the mind cannot be so developed. Nature is infinite; and a small part of one kingdom cannot be understood, however carefully studied, without some knowledge of the rest. Neither must a man allow himself to be a mere naturalist. Every man ought to seek to form for himself, for his own happiness and enjoyment, the highest character for intelligence, and for just and generous feeling, of which he is capable. He is not a mere student of

a department of nature. He is a man ; he must make himself a wise, generous, and well-informed man, able to sympathize with all that is most beautiful in nature and art, and best in society. It would be a poor, dull world if all men of talent were to educate themselves to be mere artisans, mere politicians, or mere naturalists.

"Agassiz took a large, comprehensive view of the whole field of natural history. His thorough education and intimate acquaintance with the works of the highest men in several walks made it possible for him to do it, and he then fixed on certain departments, and for the time he gave himself entirely to one."

What Mr. Emerson says of Agassiz as a teacher is equally true of himself.

"His example has been inestimable: showing the importance of the best and largest possible preparation ; teaching by things really existing and not by books ; opening the eye to the richness and beauty of nature ; showing that there is no spot, from the barren sea-beach to the top of the mountain, which does not present objects attractive to the youngest beginner, and worthy of and rewarding the careful consideration of the highest intellect."

At different periods Mr. Emerson gave lectures upon topics connected with education. These were published and widely circulated. He discoursed in 1831, before the American Institute, upon Female Education ; and in 1842 he took for his subject Moral Education. These addresses are full of profound thought and the most elevated sentiment. In their style they are transparent as crystal ; and to this day they can hardly be said to have been outgrown in the many changes of over half a century. In 1831 he published, in company with the Hon. William Sullivan, a volume entitled "The Political Class-Book," giving a statement of the origin, nature, and use of political power. For this Mr. Emerson prepared a valuable paper upon Studies for Practical Men. In 1869, at the request of the Massachusetts Historical Society, he gave a lecture on Education in Massachusetts, its Legislation and History, — full of important suggestion and valuable facts. In 1878 he republished a series of papers, which had been first printed in the "Journal of Education," entitled "Reminiscences of an Old Teacher." These gave, in an interesting manner, many facts connected with his life.

In 1830 a number of gentlemen interested in scientific pursuits formed the Natural History Society. This has since become one of the most useful and popular institutions in our community. The early meetings were held at the office of

Dr. Walter Channing, Theophilus Parsons acting as Secretary. Dr. Benjamin D. Greene was the first President, while Dr. Hayward, Dr. Ware, Dr. Greenwood, Dr. Jackson, and Dr. Augustus A. Gould were among the efficient members. In 1837 Mr. George B. Emerson was elected President, which office he held for six years. While the Society was under his charge, it was concluded that a botanical and zoölogical survey should be made of the whole State, to supplement the geological survey by Professor Hitchcock, which had been authorized by the Legislature the year previous. The shells, insects, fishes, reptiles, and birds, together with the plants and trees of the Commonwealth, were to be fully investigated. Edward Everett, the Governor at that time, appointed Mr. Emerson Chairman of the Commission, making him responsible for the various departments. Among the gentlemen to whom the different subjects were referred were Dr. Harris, Dr. Augustus Gould, Dr. Storer, Rev. W. B. O. Peabody, of Springfield, and Professor Chester Dewey, of the Berkshire Medical Institute, — all able men and in every way competent for the important work; while their elaborate reports were not only considered valuable at the time when they were made, but are held to this day as authority upon the subjects of which they treat.

These surveys, made through the suggestion of the Natural History Society, and under the auspices of the Legislature, were of practical value in promoting the material interests of the State, and they gave a fresh impulse through the community to the study of natural science. The changes which have taken place in the scientific world since the formation of the Natural History Society have been very remarkable. Tastes which were confined to a few, now extensively prevail, and the various fields open for investigation have been both widened and enriched by the knowledge which has been acquired. Geology, almost within the memory of living persons, could hardly be called a science, — now it rivals astronomy in the grandeur of its facts; while astronomy, opening into infinitude, sees all space kindling with innumerable stars, and even the dim-floating nebula, which to the unaided eye appears but a luminous mist, resolves itself into planets and satellites and revolving systems of worlds. Chemistry has also made extraordinary progress, and laid society everywhere under obligation for what it has achieved; while botany, that fascinating study, which even now numbers the species of plants by hundreds of thousands, is constantly enlarging its boundaries, exciting the mind to

fresh wonder by the wayside and in the forest, along the borders of brooks and rivers, and on the mountain-tops where the delicate alpine plants delight to find a home.

Mr. Emerson, with his broad sympathy, could not pass by any of the sciences with indifference. His heart was large enough to embrace them all. They each had their peculiar interests. To his mind the kingdoms of nature blended the one with the other; and the more largely his knowledge was extended, the greater was the satisfaction gained. Thus, as he watched at night the brilliant constellations in the over-arching sky, he recalled in thought his astronomical studies at Cambridge, and declared that nothing gave him so much real pleasure; and that he never looked up into the heavens without experiencing a joy which no other object afforded. Still, life is too short, and the faculties of man too limited, to enable any one to grasp the whole domain of nature or to master completely the entire realm of knowledge. Circumstances have their inevitable influence, and as a general rule some one department of study will gain a preference. Hence, from various causes botanical researches occupied much of Mr. Emerson's time and thought. The trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers of New England held a prominent place in his mind. At one period of his life the professorship of Natural History and the direction of the Botanical Garden at Cambridge, in connection with Harvard University, were offered to him, showing how fully his tastes were understood and his acquirements recognized.

Though he declined this professorship, the love of nature tenaciously clung to him. His thoughts went back to the old homestead, and to the time when he worked in his father's garden and on the farm. Trees and flowers were the study of his childhood, and they continued to be his delight through advancing years. "Cherish," said Schiller, "the dreams of thy youth." It was just those dreams which Mr. Emerson did cherish. His sincerest pleasure was in direct intercourse with nature. The fields and the forests had ever for him an inexhaustible beauty; but such was his natural taste for scientific exactness, that he was constantly busy in the pursuit of facts, and indefatigable in tracing every step in the whole chain of evidence in his original investigations. Cherishing this spirit, the universe to him was never disjointed and purposeless. On the contrary, he found completeness and harmony everywhere. The external world, as he looked upon it, appeared like an illuminated missal. Often he seemed to be reading—as in a living epistle—messages

from God. As he traced the law of development through seed and bud and plant, he was brought face to face with that Divine Intelligence which is alike the creative spring and living soul of the universe. Such, indeed, were the dreams of his youth,—dreams to which he had been ceaselessly true, and which he devoutly cherished in the maturity of age. And now that he has departed, how beautiful is the thought that his memory will be ever associated with the loveliest objects in nature !

Familiar as Mr. Emerson was with both the agricultural and botanical products of New England, he could not be satisfied with any thing which might even appear as superficial. He therefore devoted ten and twelve weeks through nine successive summers to explorations over the whole Commonwealth of Massachusetts, from the hills of Berkshire to Martha's Vineyard, and from the banks of the Merrimac to the shores of Narragansett Bay, while he penetrated through all the adjoining States and left nothing undone which might add to the value of his investigations. The full report published by order of the Legislature in 1846, was widely welcomed, and after the lapse of a quarter of a century it still retains its popularity ; while the recognition of its literary merit and its substantial worth will cause it to be handed down from one generation to another. And this may be true even though other able reports should be written to meet progressive requirements.

One of the last labors of Mr. Emerson's life was carefully to revise the whole work, sparing no expense to have its information complete down to that time, and its illustrations such as should reflect honor upon the country. These volumes, for exactness of knowledge, thoroughness of detail, perfection of typographical finish, artistic skill and consummate genius in the illustrative drawings, with a perfect adaptation to the purpose for which the book was prepared, render the whole work a fitting monument to the memory of the writer.

We remember well an incident that occurred at the time of Mr. Emerson's researches. The trees of New England was the subject of conversation ; a theme which with him never became exhausted. He called attention to Spenser's "Faerie Queene," and then turned the conversation upon Henry Hallam, whose truthfulness in matters of criticism was generally beyond question. He now invited our thought to Spenser as referred to by Hallam in his "Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries," and cited the following words by Hallam :

"Spenser seems to have been sometimes deficient in one attribute of a great poet, — the continual reference to the truth of nature. This objection is true of the stanza enumerating as many kinds of trees as the poet could call to mind in the description of a forest." Hallam then quotes the entire stanza, beginning, —

"The sailing pine, the cedar proud and tall,  
The vine-prop elm, the poplar never dry."

"Every one knows," he says, "that a natural forest never contains such a variety of species; and never could such a medley as Spenser has brought together from all soils and climates long exist, even if planted by the hands of man."

Mr. Emerson was familiar with a natural forest within a few miles of Boston, where every tree named by Spenser stands both firm and in good condition. In Europe all these trees might not be found in near companionship; but in New England they illustrate the poet and verify his truth. If Henry Hallam had been here, it might have impressed him strangely, and his superfluous comment on Spenser could have been spared.

Mr. Thomas T. Bouvé, President of the Society of Natural History, in paying a just tribute to Mr. Emerson, dwells upon his services rendered to the State, and among these, speaks of the exceeding value of his botanical labors. He writes: —

"The Report is not only admirable in its scientific features, but is most charming from a literary point of view. It takes one out with the writer into the fields and woods, and makes the reader at once the interested student and the personal friend, so to speak, of the tree or shrub which the writer may be describing at the time."

Mr. Emerson's remarks upon our forests, their uses, and the importance of their preservation, are of peculiar interest and value, especially at this time, when often, through culpable neglect and carelessness, thousands of acres are swept away by fires, covering with desolation vast regions of country. Wholly aside from the attractive beauty of our forests, they have an immense effect upon soil and climate and atmosphere. Their influence upon the electric forces, and the amount of rain-falls, affecting seriously brooks and rivers, is far beyond the general estimation. All that Mr. Emerson says under this head is of incalculable importance, and fortunate will it be for the country if his words of warning are heeded.

In the spacious building of the Society of Natural History one of the leading attractions is the Botanical Department, containing over fifty thousand specimens. Mr. Emerson contributed to this collection not only valuable botanical works, but a complete set of the illustrations from the last edition of his work. These were selected from the best impressions, and appropriately framed. In this hall and gallery Mr. Edward T. Bouvé has arranged several hundred admirable specimens of the wood, the leaves, the flowers, and the fruits of New England. Nothing can surpass the skill and taste manifested throughout the whole arrangement. The fibres and tissues and whole structure may here be seen. Transverse sections of each tree are given. Here the methods of growth may be traced and individual peculiarities examined, and each student may pursue his investigations to the greatest possible advantage. The delight which Mr. Emerson's extended Report awakened, led, as one of its results, to the careful gathering of these specimens, and to their exquisite preparation and careful scientific arrangement. The sections of wood are so artistically cut and polished, that the internal structure becomes, as it were, transparent, through this lifelike presentation. This collection, embracing even now nearly every plant and tree of New England, in the order in which Mr. Emerson describes them, is in itself one of the most beautiful tributes any book could receive. The following letters from the father and son will add whatever further information may be needed; while they also prove the deep gratification thus imparted to Mr. Emerson, and the heartiness of his thanks for what had been done.

Boston, Jan. 28, 1882.

MY DEAR MR. WATERSTON, — Father tells me that you desire to know the connection which Mr. George B. Emerson had with the collection, at the rooms of the Society of Natural History, of the specimens representing the woody plants of New England. In order to give you a just idea of the matter, I shall have to go back some time, and say that a number of years ago father suggested to me the collection, and preparation for a cabinet, of the *woods* of the Massachusetts trees and shrubs. This suggestion I at once commenced to act upon; and, taking Mr. Emerson's most delightful Report for a text-book, I soon found myself deeply interested in making a full collection, not only of the woods of different trees, but of every thing necessary to the foundation of a complete herbarium; that is, of course, the leaves, flowers, and fruit of the various species.

I began to do this for myself, but father soon spoke of something that he wished might be done for the Society, in a way that was, I

think, novel in this country; that is, the arrangement of an herbarium to comprise the woody plants of New England, so that they might be seen and studied by visitors to the Museum, in exhibition cases like the other collections.

In accordance with his desire I immediately began work upon such a collection in connection with the preparation of the woods themselves, and have for the past few years been engaged, as time allowed, in gathering through the summer, and arranging and mounting under glass in winter, such specimens as I have been able to obtain.

Father early told Mr. Emerson of what had been done, informing him of my strong desire to illustrate, so to speak, his "Report on the Trees and Shrubs," which I have always looked upon as one of the most charming of books; and Mr. Emerson was very much gratified, both that the collection was being made, and that it had reference to his own work so nearly. He spoke to me with great warmth on the subject whenever it was my good fortune to meet him, and testified in another way his interest by sending to the Society, to be placed with this collection, a set of the superb illustrations to his new edition of the "Trees and Shrubs."

It was his earnest desire that I should be able to finish the collection while he was yet living, so that he could see it done; but, alas! it was not possible. My time is closely occupied, and I have been latterly less able to give attention to this work than it was in my power to do some years since. Besides this, the specimens necessary to the completion of the collection are rare ones, many of them Alpine species not easily obtainable. I am unwilling to put specimens on exhibition unless I have collected and studied them out myself, thereby feeling secure of there being no mistake as to identity.

Something, however, is being done every year, and I hope that the collection may be completed within a reasonable time.

So far as this work at the Society may be deemed of value the credit belongs largely, if indirectly, to Mr. Emerson, through the inspiration derived from his book; and to my father is due the fact of there being such a collection at the Museum, both through his desire expressed to me at first, and through the continual incitement of that interest, that aid, and that companionship in rambles after specimens and in investigations, which has been and is more delightful to me than I am able to express.

With great respect and very great regard,

Yours truly,

EDWARD T. BOUVÉ.

BOSTON, Feb. 3, 1882.

MY DEAR MR. WATERSTON,—I do not know that I can add any thing to what has been expressed in the accompanying letter, which will be of service to you, beyond stating that our dear departed friend manifested to me very strongly his delight in knowing of the work upon which my son was engaged. I had the pleasure of first taking him to the room where the collection was placed on exhibition, and of

stating to him that though it was intended to embrace all New England species, yet my son and myself had been led to its formation by the desire to have his grand work on the "Trees and Shrubs of Massachusetts" illustrated by natural specimens, so that students of that work would be aided thereby.

After hearing my remarks, and quietly examining the collection, as we were descending the stairs leading to the main hall he suddenly stopped, and turning to me very warmly and with much emotion, said, "Why, I never had so great a compliment paid me." I think I quote his very words. That he felt strongly all he expressed, I am sure; and it is a great pleasure to me to know that the work of my son contributed so materially to his happiness even for a brief period.

That he continued to appreciate what was doing and had been done, was shown, I think, by his inviting me to come to his house and designate what botanical works from his library would be serviceable to the Society, and by the subsequent presentation of the same.

The donation was of great value.

If what my son or myself has expressed is found of use to you in the memorial upon which you are engaged, we shall both be delighted.

And now, my dear sir, with assurances of great respect and esteem, I sign myself, as ever,

Your friend,

THOMAS T. BOUVÉ.

In a letter from Mr. Horace W. S. Cleveland,\* of Chicago, is the following statement respecting Mr. Emerson, — a description which brings him very vividly before us, and shows how strong was the personal attachment which grew up between himself and the friends he most valued.

"Mr. Emerson's friendship with my parents began in Lancaster, where a school had been established in which my father was greatly interested. Having been requested to select a teacher, he applied to his friend President Kirkland, of Harvard University, who recommended Mr. George B. Emerson. At his home in Boston, I was always sure of a cordial welcome; and when at a distance, he never failed to keep up an occasional correspondence, manifesting always a warm interest in my affairs, and ready at all times to give me the aid of friendly counsel, which his wisdom and experience rendered most valuable.

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\* Mr. Horace W. S. Cleveland was the son of Captain Richard J. Cleveland, whose energy of character was made known by his interesting "Narrative of Voyages and Commercial Enterprises," published many years ago. Mr. Horace W. S. Cleveland is widely known as Director in the Adornment of Public Grounds in Chicago and other cities. He is the author of a treatise on Forest Culture, and has written ably and earnestly on the preservation of our fast-disappearing forests. Other publications on kindred subjects he has given to the public, of great interest and importance.

"One of my earliest works at that period was designing a plan for a tract of land belonging to him in Winthrop, Massachusetts. I well remember my keen sense of pleasure at his expression of satisfaction with the result.

"As I grew up, Mr. Emerson's kindness was paternal, especially during the frequent absence of my parents. In after years, when I had a farm near Burlington, New Jersey, he paid us a delightful visit. Most heartily he entered into all my plans and theories of horticulture, and was specially interested in examining the trees in that section of the country. Several very fine tulip-trees excited his admiration, as did also the liquid-amber tree, which grows there in great perfection. There was a magnificent hemlock on my farm, seventy feet in height and a dense mass of evergreen foliage. Mr. Emerson visited that tree daily, examining it on all sides, declaring it to be the finest specimen of hemlock he had ever seen, and affirming that it was worth a journey from Massachusetts to visit it. . . .

"During the years that followed, his friendly interest continued undiminished; and after my removal to the West, and especially while I was engaged on the construction of the South Park, at Chicago, he entered into the spirit of the objects I was trying to achieve, as if they had been his own conceptions.

"He twice visited me during that period, and the last time under circumstances of peculiar interest. He was within a few months of eighty years of age. He spent several hours inspecting what had been done and in discussing my future plans. It was a rare opportunity to converse with one who was familiar enough with forestry to grasp the conception of future results. He entered into my ideas of possibilities where every thing had to be created out of a nearly level prairie. . . .

"A new bond of friendship seemed to exist between us in the sympathy of our tastes for natural beauty, and the study of the laws of growth. His letters to me were full of suggestive matter, evincing the closeness of his observation and the justice of his conclusions; but all those letters, together with a beautifully bound copy which he sent me of his 'Trees and Shrubs of Massachusetts,' were among the treasures which I lost in the Chicago fire. . . .

"Devoting myself, as I have done, to the profession of landscape gardening, Mr. Emerson's interest in my work was throughout of great aid and encouragement. When we finally parted, I took my leave of him with the conviction that it was my last farewell on earth, but grateful for the benediction of one so well prepared for heaven. . . .

"In regard to Mr. Emerson's work on the 'Trees and Shrubs of Massachusetts,' I have no doubt that it has exerted a wide-spread influence. Judging of its effect upon myself, I cannot but believe that kindred impressions must have been shared by very many readers. To me it was a revelation which led me to look upon trees with a degree of sympathy which might almost be termed affection. Perhaps the descriptions came home to me with the more force, from the fact of my natural love, and life-long familiarity with our native forests.

Entirely independent of its scientific value, there is a permanent and pervading interest in what Mr. Emerson has written. Its perusal has always with me the same refreshing and soothing effect which the forest itself inspires. There is an influence upon the mind like that exquisite melody which may be deeply felt, while the source of its power may be indescribable. Shakespeare speaks of finding 'tongues in trees'; and it is this very language of nature which the writer has caught, the whole tendency of which is to bring the entire mind into harmony with nature itself."

The last and perfected edition of Mr. Emerson's work on the "Trees and Shrubs of Massachusetts" was dedicated to Professor Asa Gray, late President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Professor Gray, in a tribute to his friend at a meeting of the Academy, May, 1881, said that the volume by Mr. Emerson in connection with the geological survey of the Commonwealth is to be counted "among the best fruits of that survey."

He then associates Dr. Jacob Bigelow with Mr. Emerson, and says:—

"The two classics of New England botany are Dr. Bigelow's well-known 'Flora' and Mr. Emerson's treatise on the 'Trees and Shrubs of Massachusetts,' both side issues from active professional life; both unusually successful in the combination of popular with scientific treatment of their subjects, and in the extent of their influence in this community, as also in the appreciation accorded to them by scientific men."

Alluding to the progress which had been made in the natural sciences during Mr. Emerson's lifetime, the deeper and larger questions which had been dealt with by new methods and exacter researches, Professor Gray adds:—

"To the advance that has been made within the last forty years and more, Mr. Emerson's helping hand and his weighty influence have largely contributed."

From so exact a scholar, and one of such unquestioned authority, no added commendation is needed.

Soon after the new building connected with the Society of Natural History had been completed, and the dedicatory services had taken place, a new proposition was brought forward. The purpose was publicly urged to make this institution more emphatically an educational power in the community. There were members of the Society, among whom was Mr.

George B. Emerson, who were not satisfied that these rare collections should be left to yield only a momentary gratification, to be considered as mere curiosities for the entertainment of a passing hour. They felt rather that they should be studied as the monuments of past ages, the authentic record of a world's history; that teachers especially should have here every opportunity for study; and that lectures from the ablest men should aid their investigations, presenting every advantage by which their pupils should receive the benefit.

This movement led to a series of lectures by eminent men of science, who, aided by the invaluable specimens here arranged, were listened to with profound interest by more than six hundred teachers; and one may realize how wide must have been the influence thus exerted, when it is remembered that twenty-seven thousand children were under the daily care of the teachers thus assembled.

Professors Jeffries Wyman, William B. Rogers, Augustus A. Gould, Asa Gray, were among those who lectured; and at the introductory meeting the Governor of the Commonwealth, John A. Andrew; the Mayor of the City, F. W. Lincoln; and President Hill, of Harvard University, made impressive remarks. The ablest scientific men in the country gave to this movement their most cordial support. It is a great satisfaction to know that the effort made at that time exerts an unabated influence to this day. It was the inauguration of a new instrumentality, and the interest deepens as time goes by. So strong is the conviction of its utility, and the demand for instruction is so great, that a portion of the Lowell Fund has been generously appropriated to carry on the work.

Mr. Emerson had the strongest sympathy with the whole movement. He took part in the introductory meeting. His letter accepting the invitation is so cordial and modest, that it seems like hearing his voice once more to read it.

3 PEMBERTON SQUARE, March 16, 1865.

REV. R. C. WATERSTON.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your very kind note of the 12th came to me yesterday.

In behalf of the teachers, whose elder brother I am, I thank you for the interest you have shown in them, and at the same time I would thank you for doing so much to bring the subject of Natural History prominently forward as something to be thought of by teachers. I believe that one of the defects of teaching at present is in the neglect of it.

The programme of lectures is excellent; indeed, it could not be im-

proved. The rich and accurate stores of knowledge of Wyman and Gould, and the ready eloquence of Rogers, give promise of very attractive and valuable lectures. I have never heard Mr. Scudder.

I shall endeavor to be present at the place and hour you indicate, and mean to come prepared to speak if it should seem desirable. My organ of language is so poor, that I always find it better to say nothing, if others can be persuaded to speak upon the subject I have been revolving; especially if I can have an opportunity of suggesting thoughts in conversation.

Very truly yours,

GEO. B. EMERSON.

Mr. Emerson's convictions in regard to the teaching of Natural History will find best expression through his own words:—

"The relation between the mind of man and the universe in which he is placed by the Creator of both, is established for wise purposes, which it becomes us to inquire into and reverence. The volume of nature, with its infinite variety, is spread out before the opening eye, every page teeming with interest, inviting and rewarding inquiry. Every object is full of beauty, every sound has an echo in the heart of a child. Its simplest elements are level with the meanest capacity, and can be grasped by the weakest hand; while its exhaustless abundance fills the most mature mind and taxes the strongest."

And then, not willing to confine either himself or others to any narrow field of inquiry, he adds:—

"Study plants, birds, shells, rocks, any thing that is God's workmanship. Do not for a moment think that the study of his works, pursued in a right spirit, can fail to bring you nearer to Him."

These lectures, commenced by the Society of Natural History eighteen years ago, with the apprehension on the part of many that they would probably endure but for a very brief period, never, in fact, have been so prosperous as at present; and now that so large a number of able teachers give practical evidence of their attractive power, it is doubly pleasant to recall Mr. Emerson's interest in their inauguration, and the earnest manner in which he gave them both his sympathy and support.

The world upon which George B. Emerson entered in 1797 can hardly be considered the same as that from which he departed in 1881, so vast and rapid had been the advancement in nearly every phase of society. During this period

a nobler type of civilization was developing itself. An unprecedented activity was perceptible on every side. Hardly a day elapsed without some scientific or mechanical discovery. The realms of space were penetrated. The most complex elements were analyzed. The upheavals of remotest epochs were read in the formation of the planet, while the kingdoms of nature, through every clime, revealed their secret laws. The seed scattered by master minds had taken root and was fast making visible its results. New forms of industry were springing into being, and the forces of the material creation were rendering cheerful obedience to the will of man. Oceans and continents were becoming more and more closely interwoven, while electric thought, annihilating space, encircled the globe. To-day the farmer in his field gathers his harvest by machinery, the housewife by her fireside has ways once unknown of replenishing her wardrobe, while the printing-press scatters its products like snow-flakes over the nations.

Mr. Emerson's life, arching over more than eighty years of the nineteenth century, led him to see changes such as the world had never witnessed before. Under all these influences his career shaped itself. His thoughts in no small degree were thus marked and moulded, and his whole life and character received a coloring from the peculiar incidents through which he passed. Not that he was the passive creature of external circumstances; but with his sympathetic and receptive nature he was alive to influences, and from the nobler tendencies of his being he assimilated what was best. That which was elevating and enduring became his nutriment, and was converted into individual life and creative energy. He looked upon living thought from whatever quarter it came, studied it, opened his heart to it, and made it his own; yet he both reflected and acted for himself. When he studied trees or flowers it was to the forest and the hillside he went. If at midnight he was still engrossed over Xenophon and Herodotus and the *Odyssey*,—depriving himself of sleep and rest,—it was to embody that fresh knowledge and power which should aid in the work of progress both individually and socially. The impulse of the century stirred him, and he in turn sought to extend and multiply that impulse over his time. A century which for mental activity and scientific achievement has never been surpassed, found in him a worthy recipient and a faithful promoter.

He felt that no privilege could be greater than to participate in such experiences. The love of knowledge blazed within him like an inextinguishable flame whereat he would allow

all others to light their tapers or kindle their fire. This was a predominating passion; but whatever information he acquired he was eager to put to a generous use. To gain and to impart, were ruling principles of his life. Two things to him had a sacred import: to learn and to teach,—to learn all that was true and good, and to impart as much of it as might be in his power. Quiet in his manners, considerate and well-balanced, he united untiring industry with an absolute devotion to duty.

To instruct was a natural impulse of his being. He was a born teacher. There seemed to him no higher sphere or holier vocation than that which enabled him to enlighten and elevate the minds of others. Thus for more than forty years did he devote himself faithfully to his great work. In no merely artificial manner was that labor performed. Not the written rules of text-books were his arbitrary guide. His knowledge was full of life. Mind communed with mind. Enthusiasm was kindled, awakening at the time, and leaving behind it, an indescribable charm. He called forth that true sympathy which binds heart to heart, and which, amid all after changes, is never forgotten. In a community familiar with the best teachers he was second to none. Gentle and true in all he said and did, it was not simply what he *taught*, but what he *was*, that gave him his exalted position. There was a calm dignity which made his presence attractive, while his evident sincerity commanded confidence and respect. His pupils became, in after life, scattered widely over this country and in Europe, and we believe not one was ever known to speak of him without lasting gratitude and unqualified affection.

To other teachers and to the public generally his words upon the subject of education always carried great weight and were received with peculiar respect. His labors in this way were constant and varied, and it would be difficult to estimate the good that must thus have been accomplished.

One great means of influence which he possessed, was the leading minds that were naturally drawn to him, by whom and through whom he, almost unconsciously to themselves, exerted power. Men of the highest culture, citizens of the most responsible positions, prized his companionship. Probably in no community could a larger circle of influential persons be found than in that section of the country where he resided,—those who by their active philanthropy and judicious benevolence labored willingly for the public good. With all such generous and noble-hearted citizens Mr. Emerson was

a special favorite. They desired his sympathy, sought his counsel, and were eager for his co-operation; and no one was more ready to give both time and effort, or to devote them more wisely, than he.

After Mr. Emerson had taught school for more than forty years, his friends persuaded him that he needed rest, and that he ought to visit Europe. Many of his tastes pointed in that direction. His familiarity with history, science, and literature must have given, through all his journeyings, a fresh impulse to his mind; while his intimacy with both the ancient and modern languages enabled him to converse freely everywhere with men of letters, the artist and the artisan. England, France, Germany, Italy, were to him all crowded with interest. We remember meeting him in the midst of these attractions and rejoicing at the vigor of his thought. In Paris he gave us an account of his visit to Rome. We recall the fact that he dwelt particularly upon the Forum and the Colosseum, describing the plants and flowers he had gathered there, counting as high as three hundred. Other collections he had made from the Campagna and the Palace of the Cæsars. Four pleasant months were passed in Rome, wandering through galleries, clambering over ruins, penetrating catacombs, musing in St. Peter's, and searching through the untold wonders of the Eternal City. At Naples he ascended Vesuvius, looked down into its burning crater, and off over its incomparable view,—a scene which seemed like some spell of enchantment. He visited Pæstum, and beheld the temples which had met the storms of twenty centuries; and he found his way through Etruscan towns which have stood for ages, and where the wild flowers awakened his admiration. He would fill his carriage with plants and vines, that he might have an opportunity, on returning to his rooms, of examining them more at leisure. In the different countries he visited, such was his familiarity with the languages spoken, and so readily did he adapt himself to the manners and customs of the people, that they considered him as one of themselves, and almost forgot that he was a foreigner.

In visiting Germany he gave minute examination to the schools, watching every step taken, whether by teachers or pupils, day after day, and often from morning to night. As one result, he was satisfied that the schools in New England had no reason to shrink from a comparison with them.

He returned from his foreign travels with a strengthened determination to make himself useful to others. That he

was true to this purpose, all will testify who knew him. To do good seemed to be with him even more profoundly than ever a prevailing motive.

In 1870 Mr. Emerson, in company with Dr. Jacob Bigelow, then in his eighty-third year, visited the Pacific coast.

In their youth, the Mississippi River might well have appeared almost beyond reach; now it was but as a starting-point. Then the Rocky Mountains seemed inaccessible as the Himalaya; now, as their dark sides were lifted against the sky, the railroad could be seen winding over them. Here, after leaving Cheyenne, high up among the mountains, at least seven thousand feet, is the plateau known as Laramie Plain. It is a little curious that the number of flowering plants here is recorded as three hundred distinct varieties,—exactly the number Mr. Emerson had found in the Colosseum on his visit to Italy. What possible contrast could be greater than the two scenes,—their aspect, history, and associations! From thence the travellers went to Salt Lake City and the Mormon Tabernacle. They visited Council Bluffs, Echo Canyon, crossing the Alkali Plains. They ascended the Sierra Nevada and passed down the western slope. They were at San Francisco, Calistoga Springs, Sacramento, and Copperopolis. They studied the characteristic features of the redwood-trees and the *Sequoia gigantea*. It is difficult to comprehend what must have been the impression made upon minds like theirs by objects so novel and on so vast a scale. They reached home without an accident.

Without dwelling, at present, upon the Civil War, which formed so momentous an event during the latter part of Mr. Emerson's life, we will ask attention to but one movement which was most beneficent in its results, and in which he was actively engaged. From the very beginning of the war large numbers who had been slaves were thrown out of employment and needed both advice and instruction. Promptly through the whole North and West, associations were formed for the aid and direction of the freedmen. Many persons, both male and female, volunteered as teachers, ready to leave their homes and endure any hardships if they could be of service. The chief object of the Educational Commission was the industrial, social, intellectual, moral, and religious improvement of persons released from slavery in the course of the war for the Union. Mr. Emerson was from the commencement of this movement intimately associated with it. He held

the responsible position of Chairman of the Committee on Teachers, and in his reports he expresses his views upon the duties before them, and the result of what had been done. He states that "the blacks upon many of the plantations had been deserted by their former masters, and were without control or guidance. No system or order had yet been introduced into their habits or their methods of labor. The life of dependence which they had so long led had unfitted them for the time, with few exceptions, for independent action on their own account."

Both at Port Royal and the Sea Islands the work of instruction was carried on systematically and extensively, and with most gratifying success. At Port Royal Mr. Edward L. Pierce (since so well known on both sides of the Atlantic by his biography of Charles Sumner) acted as superintendent, with thirty-one teachers. Every thing was done which an enlightened policy and humane feeling could dictate. Other teachers were soon sent, making the number at Port Royal seventy-two. From two to three thousand children received instruction in the schools. Teachers were also at work in Fortress Monroe, at Washington and Alexandria, and other places. The number of persons ready and anxious to engage in this work was very great. Mr. Emerson states in his report that hundreds of letters had been received, many from persons of the highest qualifications, desirous to labor in so interesting a field, and willing to endure personal hardships and to make any sacrifice. "It was soon apparent," he writes, "as had already been anticipated, that the instruction most needed by the blacks was not in the knowledge of school-books, but in that which should lead them to appreciate the advantage of civilized life, to relinquish the habits and customs of slavery, and to learn the duties and responsibilities of free men."

In the work in which Mr. Emerson was actively engaged, more than a thousand teachers were employed throughout the South, imparting instruction to over one hundred thousand persons, both young and old.

During the memorable period of Mr. Emerson's life, may it not justly be said, that he witnessed, if not the formation of a national literature, the preliminary steps to such a desirable consummation? In the days of his early youth, and even in his advancing manhood, nearly all books printed or read in America were written by authors associated with other countries. Even the books that were written here, were for the

most part modelled upon foreign standards. The leading minds of other lands were naturally the guides of our intellectual life. History, biography, poetry and prose, and all the different phases of literature, came to us as a matter of course from beyond the Atlantic. The time had not yet come for an original growth. The Reformation, the Revival of Learning, the "golden age" of Elizabeth, the men of science and philosophy, were our rich and abundant resources. With such treasures within reach, it was a temptation to *reproduce* rather than to *create*. Through all nature there are separate stages of growth. Each period in a country's history has its own work. First are the pioneers, by whom forests are to be felled and lands cleared and cultivated; then comes the promotion of social order and the development of civil institutions; then every variety of manual labor, agriculture, traffic, commerce; then the great questions of human rights, with the struggle for progress and freedom. These are practical problems to be solved, and for the time are supreme. Native authorship with original strength and vigor, kindling with individual genius, will ripen in due time. There is a fitting season for preparation. One period becomes the essential precursor of that which follows. Down to the opening of the nineteenth century there was in this country all that answered the immediate want. But with the increase of intellectual activity came a new development of original power, a freshness of imagery, strength of thought, masterly methods of presentation, and the undeniable impress of creative genius; not simply a transplanting from other lands, but the adoption from various literatures of whatever elements are best, with a new spirit superadded, embracing in its comprehensiveness both depth and breadth, breathing the aroma of the woods, and reflecting, through all, the life and spirit of the time. Mr. William Cullen Bryant as late as 1817, when Mr. Emerson was twenty years of age, in referring to the prominent American poets of that day, names, in all honesty, Dwight, Barlow, Trumbull, Humphreys, Clifton, and Honeywood; and he speaks of a Dr. Ladd of Rhode Island, who was much celebrated in his time for poetical talent. Contrast this poetical literature with what has since become familiar to every mind, through the productions of Bryant, Dana, Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, and Holmes, and many others whose writings are now as well known beyond the sea as in our own land. We will not venture to expatiate upon this theme. Neither need we speak of Washington Irving, or Ralph Waldo Emerson, or Nathaniel Hawthorne,

unsurpassed in their way; or of historians like Sparks, and Prescott, and Motley, and Bancroft, all of whom, during the life we are considering, did a marvellous work in perfecting the literature of their country and time, and stamping it with a national character.

It is understood to have been through Mr. Emerson's influence that his friend, Mr. James Arnold, of New Bedford, left the munificent bequest upon which the Arnold Arboretum at Cambridge is founded.

In 1859 Mr. Emerson received from Harvard University the degree of Doctor of Laws. He was early elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, of which through many years he continued a valued associate.

We have traced his career through one of the most eventful periods of history, and have seen that he did his part to secure, both to the individual and to society, the advantage of positive knowledge. He united in all his studies an unwavering love of truth, with quiet self-control, and conscientious fidelity.

After a life crowded with usefulness, George B. Emerson died March 4, 1881, at the advanced age of eighty-four. He had passed through experiences of sorrow in the death of those very dear to him, but he had met bereavement with a firm trust. Never was his mind darkened or embittered by grief; rather by such discipline was his faith strengthened, and his whole nature brought into closer communion with Heaven. Thus advancing years, if they brought incidental feebleness, brought also accumulated blessings, while he had

"That which should accompany old age,  
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends."

Those who through his active life had stood by his side as companions and co-workers felt deeply his loss; while the young, who had been taught by his wisdom, dwelt fondly upon his memory, always cherishing a sense of profound indebtedness and grateful affection.

Through his whole life had been seen the attractiveness of truth. With clear perceptions and calm judgment he had been faithful to his highest convictions. Sincere in his goodness, each duty had been fulfilled with undeviating integrity. Thus even to his last days he was tranquil and happy. The kind Providence that had watched over him through all his

pilgrimage was still with him to smooth his pathway, showing him, at times, visions of his celestial home. With brightest anticipation did he pass into the glorious future:—

“ His riper age  
Marked with some act of goodness every day;  
And, watched by eyes that loved him, calm and sage,  
Faded his late declining years away.  
Cheerful he gave his being up, and went  
To share the holy rest that waits a life well spent.”